

**STRICTURES**

**ON**

**WILLIAMS' REPLY**

**TO**

**LECTURES ON BAPTISM.**

**BY**

**JOHN T. PRESSLY, D. D.**

**PITTSBURGH:**

**PRINTED BY A. JAYNES, FRANKLIN HEAD, THIRD STREET.**

**1842.**

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## P R E F A C E.

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**THAT** it is the duty of every professed follower of Christ, and especially of every christian minister, to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, will be admitted by all. With regard to some things included in the general system of faith, it may be expected that, in the present state of imperfection, there will exist some diversity of opinion, even among brethren. While, therefore, every one should be fully persuaded in his own mind and should testify unequivocally and decidedly in favor of that which he believes to be the truth of God, we should at the same time treat with tenderness and courtesy, those whose views of truth may in some respects differ from our own. And when religious controversy is conducted with candor and honesty; when the views of an opponent are fairly stated and his argument fairly met, no feelings inconsistent with the Gospel need be excited; truth may be elicited, and error exposed in its true colors. But when a writer mis-

represents an argument which he finds it difficult to meet, and by an unfair exhibition of the views of his opponent, endeavors to place him in a ridiculous attitude, instead of showing the inconclusiveness of his reasoning, the evil passions of our nature are apt to be aroused, christianity suffers, and the humble inquirer after truth is perplexed, rather than assisted.

In preparing a compendious treatise on Baptism, more especially for the benefit of the people of my own charge, it was my object to avoid every thing like controversial asperity, as far as might be consistent with a faithful exhibition of what I regard as important truth. And I flatter myself that little will be found in that volume calculated to offend even those brethren who may not be able to concur with me in sentiment. When I have had occasion to speak of the peculiar views of Baptists, I hope I have treated them with becoming respect. While I certainly entertain no unkind feelings towards those brethren from whom I differ in opinion on the subject of baptism, I hope that no unkindness is manifested in what I have written. Though I must believe that they are mistaken in their views with regard to some principles of much importance, yet I doubt not that they are sincere and honest in adhering to the views which they have espoused. And therefore, while I reject their conclusions, I would respect their sincerity.

Almost as soon as my humble publication began to draw the breath of life, it was furiously assailed by a writer who manifested a disposition at least, to strangle it in its very cradle. With the Rev. SAMUEL WILLIAMS, a minister of the Gospel in connection with the Baptist church, I have had a limited acquaintance for some ten years past. In all my intercourse with that gentleman, I have been led to regard him as a respectable man, an humble christian, and a useful and laborious minister of the Gospel. But with the "Pastor of the *First Baptized Church* of Pittsburgh," author of the "Reply," I have no acquaintance, save that which has been derived from a perusal of his publication. Whatever may be my regard for the man, I should be wanting in respect for myself, were I to profess respect for the author. Not content with misrepresenting my views, he has in repeated instances, attributed to me, motives which are utterly inconsistent with the christian character. And this ungenerous and unfraternal course is the less excusable, as no provocation was given, unless a plain and simple exhibition of what I believe to be precious truth, should be regarded as ground of offence.

It will be manifest, however, to every intelligent reader, that through the excess of his desire to become an author, the Pastor of the *First Baptized*

*Church* of Pittsburgh, began to write before he was ready. And if he has occasionally stumbled and fallen, he has only experienced the fate of those rash children who venture to run before they are well able to walk. It is hoped, however, that he will profit by his past experience, and that hereafter, he will endeavor to mature his views before he obtrudes them upon the attention of the public.

That the reader of these Strictures may come to the knowledge of the truth, and experience joy and peace in believing, is the prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

# STRICTURES, &c.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE REPLY MISREPRESENTS THE POSITION TAKEN BY THE LECTURES.

In the regular exercise of my ministry, I delivered some time since, a series of Lectures on the subject of Christian Baptism, with a view to the edification of the people of my charge. At the request of my friends, these Lectures were afterwards published. Shortly after they were issued from the press there appeared a publication which professes to be a "Reply" to the Lectures, by an individual who arrogates to himself the presumptuous title of "Pastor of the *First Baptized Church* of Pittsburgh."

In the estimation of every one, whose opinion has been expressed in my hearing, the "Reply," whether the matter of it, or the spirit which pervades it, be regarded, is wholly unworthy of any thing like a formal answer. In that opinion I fully concur. For the sake of the cause, however, of which I am the humble advocate, it has been thought that the boldness, and arrogance, and ignorance, which display themselves so conspicuously in the "Reply,"

should be exposed. For such a work, I have neither leisure nor inclination. But if a zealous apostle found it necessary to withstand a brother to his face, because he was to be blamed for his unchristian conduct, it seems that this arrogant boaster, who presumes to place himself on an eminence of his own creation, and virtually says to all the churches of God's people around him, "Ye are no churches of Christ!" should be rebuked before the bar of the christian public.

"The Pastor of the *First Baptized Church* of Pittsburgh!" Then, ye venerable Fathers in Christ, Black, and Bruce, and Herron, and others, who, it may be, were pastors, before Samuel Williams could answer the question in the child's catechism, "Who made you?" are the Pastors of unbaptized churches! The baptism which you have been administering for nearly half a century, is no christian baptism! The hundreds whom you have admitted into the fellowship of the household of faith, are all unbaptized! According to the Pope, who issues his Bulls from the corner of Grant and Third streets, neither you, nor the people of your several flocks, belong to the church of Christ; for you are all unbaptized!

And on what authority is a position assumed, by which nine-tenths of the Lord's people are virtually thrown out of the church of Christ into the world, which lieth in wickedness? Why, it is because the water of baptism has not been applied to the body, in the administration of the external rite, in that particular way which Samuel Williams has determined to be the only proper way.

But passing by the arrogance which Mr. Williams displays, in presuming to place himself before the

christian public as the only Pastor of a "*Baptized church*," in the city of Pittsburgh, where there are, it may be, a dozen Pastors no way inferior to himself in any thing which adorns the pastoral character, let me direct the attention of the reader to some examples of his want of candor and honesty in stating the views of the author to whom he professes to reply.

On page 6 of the "Reply," the author represents the "Lectures," as admitting, that the commission which our Lord gave to his apostles, "specified no other subjects of baptism than believers." At the bottom of the same page this statement is repeated. "He (Dr. P.) admits that believers are the only subjects specified in the commission." Again on page 8, he adds, "Dr. P. admits that the only law of baptism God ever gave to man, does not include infants." Why, Mr. Williams might just as well have affirmed, that Dr. Pressly admits that infants have no right to baptism; and then it would have been wholly unnecessary to have put himself to the trouble of writing his "Reply."

But this is not all. On page 10 he says again—"The Dr. admits that the commission, or law of baptism, does not afford any evidence of the right of infant baptism." And yet once more he repeats,— "He says they are not included in it." Here, for the fifth time, Mr. Williams represents the author of the Lectures, as yielding the point in controversy. For certainly, if "the only law of baptism God ever gave to man, does not include infants," then it would be idle to plead for the divine right of infant baptism.

It would appear that the author of the "Reply" has revolved the idea in his own mind, until somehow or other he has persuaded himself to believe

that the Lectures really do admit what he alleges. Every time the statement is repeated, it seems to be expressed with additional strength and boldness. In the first place he represents the Dr. as admitting simply that the commission does not specify any other subjects of baptism than believers. Again, he becomes more bold and says, the Dr. admits that "the only law of baptism God ever gave to man, does not include infants." And yet if the reader will turn to page 25 of the Lectures, to which Mr. Williams refers, he will see that there is not a particle of truth in the allegation of the "Reply." The language employed in the Lectures is the following: "Such expressions as these,—'He that believeth and is baptized;' 'Repent and be baptized,' it is admitted, do not afford any evidence of the right of infant baptism, and it is equally plain that they furnish no argument against it." The reader will observe, that there is nothing here said in reference to the commission which our Lord gave to his apostles to administer baptism; much less is there an admission that infants are not included in "the only law of baptism God ever gave to man." The commission given to the apostles, runs in these words: "Go teach (disciple) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." And on page 72 of the Lectures, the reader may see that I have adduced the testimony of Justin Martyr, to show that there were many of the brethren then living, "who from *childhood, were made disciples to Christ*," and consequently, that in the estimation of this ancient Father, the command, "to disciple all nations," does include infants.

Again, on page 7, we have another instance of gross misrepresentation. The Lectures are charged



with "assuming that faith is as indispensable to the salvation of the infant, as to the salvation of the adult; and that baptism is as essential to the salvation of the soul of the infant, as eating is to the life of the body." And having conjured up

"Gorgons and chimeras dire,"

the author of the "Reply" is literally frightened by the creatures of his own imagination, and exclaims, "These are revolting assumptions." They are doubtless revolting enough. It may, however, be sufficient to reply, that there are no such assumptions in the Lectures, nor any thing like them; nor have such assumptions any connection with the doctrine maintained in the volume to which Mr. Williams professes to reply.

The position taken in the Lectures is, that, to maintain that the declaration, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," authorizes the conclusion that none except such as are capable of believing, are proper subjects of baptism, is not to reason legitimately. And to show the inconclusiveness of this mode of reasoning, the Lectures subject it to the plain test of examination. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." On these words the Baptist reasons thus: "Infants are not capable of believing; therefore they may not be baptized." On this manner of reasoning the Lectures remark, "If this inference is valid, let us see to what results it will lead. Our Lord further declares, 'He that believeth not shall be damned.' Apply the mode of reasoning, which we are examining, to this declaration. Infants are not capable of believing; therefore all infants shall be damned!" The

reader will at once perceive that this is a totally different thing from an assumption, "that faith is as indispensable to the salvation of an infant, as to the salvation of an adult." The Lectures do not assume, but clearly show, that the mode of reasoning employed by Baptists, in excluding infants from baptism, would, if carried out, likewise exclude them from salvation. This is the position, not assumed, but demonstrated in the Lectures; and it is perfectly evident, that Mr. Williams does not know how to get over this difficulty in his way. He finds it an easier task to conjure up terrific "assumptions," which have no existence save in a disordered brain, and then, fairly frightened by the creatures of his own imagination, he runs away, uttering the exclamation, "These are revolting assumptions, and are utterly at war with truth and reason."

For the purpose of making still more apparent, the fallacy of the mode of reasoning by which the Baptists would cut our children off from an interest in baptism, the Lectures give another illustration. "In his epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul the apostle says, 'When we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.' 2 Thess. 3:10. Now suppose we should reason from this passage of Scripture, precisely in the same manner as our friends would argue in opposition to the right of infant baptism, from the declaration of our Lord, to which we have referred, to what conclusion should we be conducted? We might reason thus: Infants cannot work; therefore they may not eat! And according to this manner of reasoning, the authority of the apostle might be pleaded in support of the doctrine, that infants who cannot labor for a subsistence, must be left to starve."

Such is the language of the book to which Mr. Williams professes to reply; and any school-boy can see that it is an illegitimate and inconclusive mode of reasoning which is here exposed. But the author of the "Reply" will have it, that here is an assumption that baptism is as essential to the salvation of the soul of the infant, as eating is to the life of the body! An idea which, for aught I know, never occurred to the mind of man, before it arose amid the lucubrations of the "Pastor of the First Baptized Church of Pittsburgh."



## CHAPTER II.

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF INFANT BAPTISM DRAWN FROM THE FACT, THAT THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS WERE, AT THE FIRST, CONSTITUTED MEMBERS OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH OF GOD.

As another example of the want of candor and honesty, let me request the reader to notice the manner in which the "Reply" misrepresents the argument of the Lectures in support of the right of infant baptism drawn from the fact, that the infants of believers were originally constituted members of the visible church of God. The argument is a plain one, and one which rests upon an indisputable fact; and it is perfectly evident that the author of the "Reply" does not know what to do with it. Having sufficient discernment to perceive, that it would not be safe for him to grapple the argument, like a wary general, who knows the power of his foe, he prudently avoids an engagement and keeps at a distance.

The argument advanced in the Lectures may be thus stated: God has established a church on earth, in which he dispenses the blessings of his grace, and prepares the heirs of salvation for the enjoyment of heavenly glory. At the first establishment of this church as an organized society in the family of Abraham, the infants of believers were constituted members of it. As an evidence of their con-

nection with the church, God expressly ordained that they should receive the external sign of his covenant with his church. Such was the relation of infants to the church of God, under the legal dispensation. And our conclusion from this position is, that as the church still exists, the infants of believers are still to be regarded as entitled to membership, unless it can be shown that God, who originally conferred this privilege, has taken it away.

Now, how does the author of the "Reply" meet this argument? Does he even once look it in the face? Any one who will submit to the toil of reading his confused and incoherent remarks on this part of the subject, may see that he never once gives a fair statement of the argument which he proposes to answer; and that he does not venture to assail the position which the Lectures take.

On page 13, the "Reply" remarks: "The first argument of the Dr. is from the supposed identity of the Jewish and Christian church." The reader will please to observe, that this is not the argument of the Lectures, but the version of it, which Mr. Williams chooses to give. The argument is drawn, not from the "supposed identity" of two different churches, but from the real and indisputable identity of the church of God, under the Jewish and Christian dispensations. The church of God existed in the days of Abraham; continued to exist down to the period of the introduction of the gospel dispensation; and still exists, since that brighter day dawned upon the world. This is the firm position on which the argument of the Lectures rests; and I would like to know if Mr. Williams, with the Bible before him, would dare to question the correctness of this position. From the "Reply," it would appear that he

neither has the candor to admit that the basis of the argument is solid, nor yet the courage to deny it. After giving an incorrect version of the argument, he labors to make the author of the Lectures appear ridiculous, by insinuating that he goes to the Old Testament to find a New Testament ordinance. And to do this the "Reply" adds, is "very singular," "because the ordinance is not there."

Now, in the name of christian candor and courtesy, I would ask, does not Mr. Williams know, that there is no foundation whatever for this insinuation? He knows perfectly well that it is not the design of the Lectures, to find infant baptism in the Old Testament. Did Mr. Williams write for the ignorant and credulous, who might be expected to take all his statements simply on his own authority? Even he himself must have perceived, that any person of common discernment, could see through the disingenuous artifice. No! The Lectures, as Mr. Williams very well knows, do not go to the Old Testament for the purpose of finding infant baptism. But, as it is in the Old Testament that we have the history of the first establishment of the church of God, the Lectures very naturally go there to learn who, according to the divine appointment, were constituted members of this church. And the Lectures find in the Old Testament a fact of great importance, which is most vexatiously perplexing to Mr. Williams' system; and that is, that the infants of believers have, by God's own appointment, a right to membership in his church.

After all, it is not very surprising that Mr. Williams should manifest some unwillingness to be conducted to that portion of the word of God, where this stubborn and unmanageable fact stares him in

the face, and sternly rebukes his exclusive system. But, we must be allowed to remind the author of the "Reply," that it is a fact very clearly revealed in the sacred Oracles, that he who appointed a church in our world, and hath said of this church in the Old Testament, "The Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation; this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it;" has likewise ordained the membership of the infants of believers in this church. This is the important fact on which the argument of the Lectures rests; and this fact you cannot deny.

A question then naturally arises: Does this church of which infants were at first constituted members, still exist? The Lectures reply in the affirmative, and you will not deny it. Well, if the church of God, of which infants were divinely constituted members, still exists, the conclusion is irresistible that infants are still entitled to membership in the church, unless it can be made appear that God who conferred the right has taken it away. This you cannot do, and have not the courage to attempt. Our conclusion then remains unshaken.

It is really amusing to see, that while Mr. Williams affects to think lightly of this argument, and tries to persuade the credulous reader to laugh at it, he himself, when he occasionally looks at it from a distance, fairly writhes under its withering power. He accordingly endeavors more than once, to work his courage up to the fighting point, and give it battle. An effort of this kind, the reader may see on page 14. To admit the identity of the church of God in all ages, would be fatal to his system; and yet to deny in plain language, so manifest a Scriptural truth, would be to render himself ridiculous in



the estimation of all intelligent christians. Something like a denial, however, is repeatedly made to keep up the show of opposition to the argument of the Lectures. For example: The argument is, "The church of God is the same under every dispensation." But, says the "Reply," with a great appearance of intrepidity, "It can never be shown that the Jewish nation and the kingdom of Christ are the same." Wonderful discovery! But who ever thought or said that they were the same. Can it not, however, be shown that the church of God, which the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world, hath redeemed by his blood, is the same under both the Jewish and Christian dispensation?—This is the point, Mr. Williams; and if you think you have strength and courage sufficient to shake this position, come forward with your artillery.

Mr. Williams seems to have been very sensible himself, that he had not met the argument. And therefore he makes another effort to arouse his latent energies, and he adds with a tone of defiance, "I do deny that the constitution of the Jewish theocracy and that of the christian church are one." Gentle reader, mark the expression! "The constitution of the Jewish theocracy and that of the christian church!" The Lectures maintain that the church of God is one. The "Reply" endeavors to refute the argument, by denying that the "constitution of the Jewish theocracy and that of the christian church are one!" How this valorous knight brandishes his sword when there is no foe in sight! Who ever maintained that the "constitution of the Jewish theocracy and that of the christian church are one?" The very thought is ridiculous. There is certainly nothing like it in the Lectures. Why then does

Mr. Williams, as an honest man, try to induce his readers to suppose that the Lectures take such ground? Does it look as though his object was the elucidation of truth and the overthrow of error?

After travelling through regions of smoke over some seventeen pages, which are devoted to my first argument, the "Reply" seems to think it necessary to come to some conclusion; and accordingly, near the bottom of page thirty, we find the following words: "From these passages, it is clearly proved that the former dispensation or church state ceased." And is this the point, Mr. Williams, which you have been laboring so hard and so long to prove; that the former dispensation has ceased? Whether you have proved it or not, it is undoubtedly the truth. But then, my dear sir, it is not only a truth which does not militate against my argument, but adds much to its force. The Lectures every where take the ground that the former dispensation has passed away, and a new and brighter dispensation has succeeded. Under the former dispensation, the church is compared by the apostle, to a minor who is yet under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father. Her light and privileges, were then greatly circumscribed. But it is now the happiness of the church, to live under a milder and more benignant dispensation, under which her privileges are greatly enlarged. But even in the state of her minority, the children of believers were connected with the church. Much more do believers enjoy this privilege now, since the darkness of the former dispensation is past, and the true light shineth.

So much, then, for Mr. Williams' "Reply" to my first argument. And when the whole of his remarks are taken together, and the chaff is separated

from the wheat, there is more said for its confirmation, than for its overthrow.

The Lectures take the position, that with the change of dispensation the external sign of membership in the church is changed. It will be admitted by all, that circumcision was the divinely appointed sign of connection with the church of God, under the former dispensation. It will also be admitted, that this institution no longer occupies a place among the ordinances of the church. The Lectures maintain, that baptism has supplied its place; and consequently that, as the infants of believers had a right to circumcision, they are now proper subjects of baptism.

To this conclusion the "Reply" is most fiercely opposed, and to supply the want of argument, draws most liberally upon bold and extravagant assertion. Take the following specimen: "From the nature of the institutions of circumcision and baptism, it is utterly impossible that one could be placed in the room of the other. They are totally dissimilar; they agree in nothing more than any other two things of which we can form a conception." Any person who possesses but a very limited knowledge of divine truth, can at once perceive that these are sweeping and extravagant assertions, made without any regard to palpable facts. Circumcision and baptism, totally dissimilar! Agree in nothing more than any other two things, of which we can form a conception! Do they not agree in this, that they are ordinances which God instituted for the benefit of his church? Do they not agree in this, that they are both external signs, which are significant of spiritual blessings? We can form a conception of truth and falsehood. Is there no more agreement

between circumcision and baptism, than between truth and falsehood? We can form a conception of horse-racing and of the sanctification of the Sabbath. Do circumcision and baptism agree in nothing, more than do horse-racing and the sanctification of the Lord's day? Mr. Williams! It is absolutely a shame for a man, who styles himself the pastor of the First baptized church of Pittsburgh, to write and publish such stuff.

After having made the above unfounded and extravagant assertion, the "Reply" proceeds to enumerate some seventeen points of difference between circumcision and baptism. It would be a very easy matter to enumerate as many more points of dissimilitude between these two ordinances. But what have these differences with regard to circumstances, to do with the argument? The two institutions may differ much, and yet the one may be abolished and the other under a new dispensation may supply its place. And though there were a thousand particulars in which circumcision and baptism differ, still it is no less true that there is a coincidence between them, in those important points, which are essential to the argument of the Lectures. In the following important particulars circumcision and baptism agree:

1. They are alike initiatory rites of the church of God. Under the former dispensation, when an individual renounced paganism and embraced the true religion, it was by circumcision that he was recognized as belonging to the church of God. And now when one comes out of the world and makes a profession of the religion of Jesus, it is by baptism that he is recognized as belonging to the household of faith.

2. They both denote the necessity of a change of heart. Deut. 30:6; John 3:5.

3. They are both significant of the way of pardon and acceptance with God, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Rom. 4:11; Acts 2:38.

Since, then, there is this remarkable coincidence between these two divine institutions, and since the one is confessedly abolished, the conclusion is that the other has supplied its place.

Before I dismiss this subject, let me request the reader to observe, that Mr. Williams, in his zeal to represent circumcision as an institution of inferior importance, not only draws a contrast between it and baptism, but he even indulges what I can regard in no other light than a spirit of profanity. He speaks repeatedly in a sneering manner of the "precious privilege" of circumcision. Examples may be seen on pages fifteen and twenty-nine. In an avowed infidel, it would be in character to speak in this manner of an ordinance of God. But that a christian minister should allow himself to speak in this manner of the divinely appointed sign of God's covenant with his people, may well excite the surprise of every serious mind. Is it a light matter for the God of blessedness and glory to condescend to establish a covenant with sinful man, in which he declares, "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee?" Is it a small matter, that in consideration of man's weakness and imperfection, he further condescended to appoint a visible sign of this covenant? And shall a worm of the dust dare to speak lightly of an interest in this covenant, or treat with contempt the appointed sign by which the covenant was confirmed? Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth; but wo unto him that striveth with his Maker.



## CHAPTER III.

THE LANGUAGE OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS APOSTLES ACCORDS WITH THE SUPPOSITION, THAT THE RELATION BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE CHILDREN OF GOD'S PEOPLE, REMAINS THE SAME UNDER THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION.

It may be proper here, that the reader should be warned, in relation to a species of unfairness, in the manner of meeting the argument in support of infant baptism, which is chargeable upon many Baptist writers, and upon the author of the Reply, among others. They take up these arguments, in an insulated form, where they are essentially connected and where they are mutually dependent upon each other. Taken together, they form a chain which cannot be broken; but if the different links which compose the chain be separated from each other, of course they will not answer the end for which the chain is intended.

In pleading the cause of our children, we place much reliance upon the argument which is drawn from the covenant made with Abraham, the Father of all true believers. But what do we propose to establish by this argument? Not directly, the right of infant baptism; but an important principle on which that right is founded. It is then disingenuous and unfair to meet this argument by uttering such

exclamations as the following: "What has the law of circumcision to do with infant baptism?" "It is strange that men would go to the Old Testament in search of baptism!"

The question with which we are now concerned, is not—does this argument directly establish the right of infant baptism?—but, does it prove the point for the establishment of which it is adduced? It might be ridiculous to regard it as proving one thing, while it very conclusively establishes another thing, which is intimately connected with the point in dispute. It may be an important link, though it may not be the entire chain.

If then it be possible to get the author of the "Reply," to understand an argument which he does not know how to answer, I would say to him, the question which the Lectures propose to decide by a reference to the covenant made with Abraham, is simply this: When a visible church was set up in the family of Abraham, were his infant seed constituted members of it, and had they, by divine appointment, a right to the external sign of membership? My argument rests on the affirmative; and it concludes, that if God once constituted the infants of believers members of his church, and gave them a right to the appointed sign of membership, they are still members and still enjoy the right. 'The first thing which the "Reply" says of this argument seems to be designed to make it appear ridiculous, by entirely misrepresenting the purpose for which it is employed. "To every intelligent mind," says the "Reply," "the notion that a New Testament ordinance is to be learned from the Old Testament writings, must seem, to say the least, very singular." To every honorable man it must seem, to say the



least, a very pitiful thing in a writer to pervert the design of an argument which he finds it difficult to meet. If there is any thing defective about the argument, let its weak points be exposed. Are the premises admitted? Did God establish a visible church in the family of Abraham? Did Abraham and his seed, through Isaac, constitute the visible church of God? Did not God appoint a visible sign of connection with this church? Did not the God of Abraham recognise his infant seed as members of this church, and appoint that they should receive the sign of membership? To all these questions, the Lectures reply in the affirmative; and will Mr. Williams say no! to any one of them? If, then, the premises be correct, they will justify some conclusion. And what is the legitimate conclusion? The Lectures argue, that if God once conferred upon the children of believers, a right,—(not to baptism; for we have not yet reached that point in the argument, but a right,)—to membership in his church, no man may take this right from them. Consequently, if Mr. Williams chooses to exclude the children of believers from all connection with the church of God, he is bound to produce authority from the New Testament to prove that a privilege once bestowed has been taken away. And how does he discharge the obligation? He tries to make a jest of the idea that circumcision was a “privilege!” It was the token of God’s covenant with his people. It was to every true Israelite a divinely appointed sign, that the God of Abraham was his God. But “we have seen,” says the “Reply,” page thirty-two, “that the rite was a bloody and painful one, not a precious privilege, not a seal of righteousness to any but Abraham, not a sign of spiritual character.”

“We have seen!” You have *said* all this, Mr. Williams; and, in speaking in this manner, you have used language much more appropriate to an enemy of our holy religion, than to a minister of the gospel. “We have seen!” What? That it is not a precious privilege, to have the God of Abraham as my God! Not a privilege to be a partaker of the sign, which God appointed to be a token of my interest in him as my God! And how did Mr. Williams see that circumcision was “not a seal of righteousness to any but Abraham?” There is certainly no such thing revealed in the Bible; and if Mr. Williams has seen it, he must have been introduced into some new field of observation. The apostle informs us that Abraham “received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being uncircumcised.” After stating the fact, that Abraham received the sign of circumcision, the apostle adds, by way of explanation of the import of this sign, that it was a seal of the righteousness of faith. The import of the sign in every case was the same, and to every descendant of Abraham who was a partaker of the faith of Abraham, it was a seal of the same blessing, namely, of that righteousness of Christ which is received by faith, and which is the only ground of a sinner’s justification before God. As to the fond conceit, that circumcision was “not a seal of righteousness to any but Abraham;” that is a specimen of the theology of Samuel Williams, not of Paul the apostle.

After concluding the argument drawn from the covenant made with Abraham, and having proved that the children of believers were regarded as members of the visible church; and having moreover proved that the church is still the same, though a

change of dispensation has taken place, the Lectures proceed to the examination of the Scriptures of the New Testament. And the remark is made, that "it is unreasonable to demand positive and express proof from the New Testament, to show that the children of believers are connected with the church of Christ." The demand is pronounced unreasonable, because the point had already been proved by the authority of God in the Old Testament. If then God has already made known his will as to the connection between the children of his people and his church; if he has already in a plain and explicit manner, declared it to be his pleasure that the infant seed of believers should be regarded as members of his church, and that the sign of their membership should be administered to them, then is it not unreasonable; nay, is it not presumptuous in man to say, "I must have positive proof of all this from the New Testament, before I will receive it?" The Lectures pronounce such a demand unreasonable; but at the same time contend that our Lord and his apostles distinctly recognise the membership of the children of believers in the visible church.

To prevent confusion, and to present the subject in a plain and simple manner to the mind of the reader, permit me here to call his attention to a distinction between two things which must not be confounded, namely, a right to membership, and the sign of membership in the church of God. It is the object of the Lectures, by the first argument which is adduced in support of infant baptism, to make it appear, that by divine appointment, the infants of believers had under the former dispensation a right to membership, and also that by the same authority they were partakers of the sign of con-

nection with the church of God; and from these premises to infer, that they still have a right to membership, and are to be regarded as entitled to the sign of membership. In so far as the reasoning is concerned, it matters not what may be the external sign of connection with the church, whether it may be circumcision or baptism, or something else, they who have a right to membership, have a right to the appointed sign of membership.

Under the former dispensation, the church was authorized to expect a great increase of light and enlargement of her privileges, in connection with the appearance of the Messiah. She is consequently called to rejoice in anticipation of his advent. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."\* "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; *he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom.*"† Such is the comforting language which the prophets employ, while they direct the church to look forward to the coming of her glorious King, and to rejoice in the blessings which he should bestow. Does this language intimate, that when the Shepherd of Israel should appear, the children of the church should suffer any diminution of their privileges? Surely not! **HE SHALL GATHER THE LAMBS WITH HIS ARMS, AND CARRY THEM IN HIS BOSOM.** Now, let us examine the New Testament,

\* Zech. 9:9.

† Isaiah 40:10, 11.

and see whether our Lord has not manifested all that kind regard for the children of his people which prophecy had taught them to expect. That he did, the Lectures argue from Matthew 19:14: "Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The reader is particularly desired to keep in view the position which the Lectures propose to establish by these interesting words of the Redeemer. It is not, then, directly the right of infant baptism. The Lectures expressly state, that "the subject of baptism is not mentioned in this passage, nor is there any thing here said, with regard to the right of infants to this seal of God's covenant." The precise point which these words are adduced to establish is, that our Lord here recognises the right of the children of believers to membership in his visible church. Prophecy had foretold, that the Messiah would gather the lambs with his arms and carry them in his bosom. And on this occasion when certain parents brought their little children to him to receive his benediction, he took them up in his arms and blessed them, saying, *of such is the kingdom of heaven*. The Lectures maintain that the phrase, the kingdom of heaven, here signifies the visible church of Christ on earth. Then the general import of our Lord's declaration will be, that little children may be regarded as members of his church. And if their membership in his church be established, it follows as a necessary consequence that they have a right to the sign of membership, which is baptism. The right of infant baptism is not directly taught in these words; but a principle is established, from which the right of infant baptism is the legitimate conclusion. And let me add, that

a just inference from a principle must always be true, provided the principle from which it is drawn is scriptural.

Now how does the author of the "Reply" meet this argument? Why, the first words to which he gives utterance are—"We could quote scores of Pedobaptist authors against the Dr. on this subject." *Scores* of them! It will be seen that the Pastor of "*the First Baptized Church*" of Pittsburgh, is a man of extensive reading.

But suppose Mr. Williams should do all that he says he could, what would he accomplish? He might prove that some other men give a different interpretation of this passage, from that which is given by me; but this would not prove that my interpretation is wrong. The Lectures, it may be remarked, do not undertake to decide the point in dispute, by the authority of great names, but by an appeal to the word of God. The question with which the Lectures are concerned, is not, what are the opinions of men? but, what are the principles taught in the Scriptures of truth? \*

Among the "scores of Pedobaptist authors," which this man of extensive reading could quote against me, Dr. Doddridge is one. Well, let us go and see what this respectable writer says in opposition to me. If the reader will turn to Doddridge's *Expositor*, he will find the following exposition of this passage: *Of such is the kingdom of God; persons of such a character are the true subjects of my kingdom, and heirs of eternal glory, to which many little children are received; and in token of it, the children of believing parents are to be admitted into my church by baptism.*" This is a specimen, gentle reader, of the "scores of Pedobaptist au-

thors," whom Mr. Williams could quote against me! The Lectures undertake to prove by this passage of Scripture, that our Lord here recognises the membership of little children in his church, and consequently, their right to baptism. And Doddridge, in his Exposition, says, "*the children of believing parents are to be admitted into my church by baptism.*" And yet this blundering writer would have the reader to believe, that this Pedobaptist author is against me. The truth is, as I shall have occasion to show more fully hereafter, Mr. Williams makes a display of familiarity with writers, whom he has either never read, or has examined so superficially, that he would need to read them again, before he undertakes to say any thing about them.

But after all, it is a matter of no consequence whether Doddridge gives an exposition of the passage, in accordance with that contained in the Lectures, or in opposition to it. The question is simply this: is the exposition given in the Lectures correct? The author of the "Reply" insinuates that it cannot be correct; and as an evidence that the view taken of the passage in the Lectures is singular, he adds, "I believe no one has ever before pretended, that this proves infant baptism." On first reading this sentence my vanity was in no small degree flattered to find, that among all the respectable writers on this subject, I had the honor to be the first who discovered the strong argument, which these words of our Lord afford, in support of infant baptism. But my vanity had scarcely time to be excited, until it was cooled by the reflection, that Mr. Williams, in the excess of his kindness, had paid me a compliment to which I am by no means entitled. The author of the "Reply" would have his readers

to suppose, that he is familiar with books; for he says he could quote "scores of Pedobaptist authors" on one single point. Will Mr. Williams have the goodness to name a single author, who has written a treatise in support of infant baptism, from the days of Tertullian down to the present time, who has not regarded this text as furnishing an important argument in its favor? On page 73 of the Lectures, the reader may see the historical evidence adduced to show, that in the second century the words in question were regarded as favoring the claims of infant baptism. And no respectable writer has ever employed his pen in defence of this dear privilege of our children, who has not considered the declaration of our Lord, *of such is the kingdom of heaven*, as having an important bearing upon the subject.

But, after endeavoring to persuade the reader to regard the application which the Lectures make of this portion of Scripture, as singular and unnatural, the author of the "Reply" seems to be very sensible that all reflecting persons would perceive that he was closing his eyes against a difficulty, rather than removing it. And, accordingly, he for once endeavors to meet the argument, by assailing the interpretation of the passage given in the Lectures. "The interpretation of the phrase, 'kingdom of heaven,' " says the "Reply," "is not sustained." And what is the interpretation which the Lectures give of this phrase? The reader may see it on page fifty-one. "By the phrase, the kingdom of heaven, as employed in the New Testament, is usually to be understood the visible church, which is the kingdom of Christ on earth." In confirmation of the correctness of this interpretation, the Lectures have fur-



nished several examples, the number of which, if necessary, could be multiplied to almost any extent. Indeed, this interpretation is so well established, and so generally received, that it is unnecessary to add any further confirmation. And I doubt not that even the author of the "Reply" himself will admit that the phrase, "the kingdom of heaven," more commonly applies to that portion of our Lord's spiritual kingdom which is on earth, or in other words, his visible church. He seems however to deny that this is the meaning of the phrase in the passage before us, and also, in another to which I have referred, Matt. 8:11, 12. If I were to adopt Mr. Williams' plan, I might here bring forward Dr. Gill, the most eminent Baptist Expositor, against him. On the words, "The children of the kingdom shall be cast out," Gill remarks: "The Jews, who were subjects of the kingdom and commonwealth of Israel, and who were also *in the church of God which is his kingdom on earth*, shall be cast out—out of the land of Israel, as they were in a few years after, and *out of the church of God.*" This Baptist expositor, it will be seen, understood our Lord as here teaching that the unbelieving Jews should be cast out, not from heaven, into which they had not been admitted, but out of the church of God, and the believing Gentiles should be introduced. And so all men of sense will understand the passage.

Now, let us see the interpretation, the paternity of which, I think, belongs of right to the pastor of the "*first baptized church*" of Pittsburgh. It may be seen on page thirty-two of the "Reply." "Our Savior represents persons of certain characters, as endeavoring to enter the gateway of heaven, who,

when they get within the entrance, are found to be destitute of the wedding garment, and are therefore cast out." It might be sufficient to say in reply to this very singular jumble of discordant ideas, that our Savior has not, in any part of the Bible, made such a representation as is here imputed to him. "*The gateway of heaven!*" There is no such thing mentioned in all the Bible. Our Lord does indeed exhort all, to "strive to enter in at the strait gate;" but he does not represent any as being cast out after they "get within the entrance." This is another specimen of Mr. Williams' theology. "The wedding garment" is mentioned but once by our Lord, and that is in the parable, in which he illustrates the state of things in the kingdom of heaven, by the similitude of a marriage entertainment which a king made for his son. This marriage entertainment significantly represents the abundance and the excellency of the provision made for sinners in the gospel; and all of every description, even the chief of sinners, are invited to come and partake of it. Among those who had professedly accepted the invitation and had come to the gospel feast, the king, when he came in to see the guests, discovered one who had not on a wedding garment. And he was cast out. But from what place was he cast out? Not from heaven, most assuredly; for he had not yet been admitted into that holy place; but from the gospel feast. It is manifest, then, that when the author of the "Reply" represents our Lord as saying that some, when they get within the entrance of heaven, are found to be destitute of the wedding garment, and are therefore cast out, he speaks without authority. Does Mr. Williams read the Bible

as carelessly as he seems to have read Doddridge, whom he represents to be against me, while he expresses the very thing for which I am pleading?

It is then abundantly evident, Mr. Williams to the contrary notwithstanding, that in the passage in question, the phrase, "kingdom of heaven," from which the unbelieving Jews were to be cast out, and into which the believing Gentiles were to be introduced, signifies the visible church on earth. And though Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were not at this time in the visible church, they had been in it, and were now, with that portion of Christ's kingdom, which is above. A portion of that sacred community, represented by the phrase, "kingdom of heaven," is on earth; another portion of it is in heaven. And hence the phrase is sometimes employed with reference to one, and sometimes to the other; though, as stated in the Lectures, more commonly it has respect to the church on earth. A person may be connected with the kingdom on earth, and yet finally be cast out; but into the kingdom above, no unclean thing can enter; and consequently, none who are once admitted, shall ever be cast out.

the following is a list of the  
names of the persons who  
were present at the meeting  
of the Board of Directors  
of the Company held on  
the 1st day of January  
1900 at the City of New  
York.

Mr. J. M. Smith  
Mr. J. D. Jones  
Mr. W. H. Brown  
Mr. C. E. White  
Mr. R. L. Green  
Mr. T. A. Black  
Mr. S. P. Grey  
Mr. M. K. Blue  
Mr. N. O. Red  
Mr. P. Q. Yellow  
Mr. R. S. Purple  
Mr. T. U. Pink  
Mr. V. W. Orange  
Mr. X. Y. Silver  
Mr. Z. A. Gold

## CHAPTER IV.

### AN EXAMINATION OF SOME PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WHICH HAVE A BEARING UPON THE RIGHT OF INFANT BAPTISM.

But, though it may be sufficiently manifest that the phrase, "the kingdom of heaven," in many other places designates the visible church of Christ, it may be inquired, Why do we understand it in that sense, in the passage under consideration, rather than as referring to that portion of Christ's kingdom which is in heaven? A little attention to the object which these parents had in view in bringing their infants to our Lord, will enable us to give a satisfactory answer to this question.

What then, I would ask, was the desire of these parents? Was it, that the Redeemer would take their children from them, and receive them into heaven? If this had been their desire, then it would have been natural to suppose, that our Lord designed by the language which he used, to assure them that such little children should be admitted into heaven. But it was far from the desire of these parents to have their children taken from them. They brought them to Christ that he would bless them, by making them partakers of the spiritual benefits of that kingdom which he came to establish on earth. And our Lord encouraged them in the most kind

and condescending manner, by assuring them that ample provision has been made in his kingdom, for the children of his people. *"Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."* If, then, we understand the expression, "the kingdom of heaven," as relating to Christ's kingdom on earth, the language which our Lord employed was directly adapted to encourage these parents in bringing their children to him, which was evidently his design.

Then let me say to all Christian parents, who believe that Jesus Christ can bless both themselves and their children by making his own ordinances the effectual means of salvation, you have much encouragement to bring your dear children to him. He has not been so regardless of your feelings as to overlook your children in the organization of his kingdom. And though Mr. Williams, who professes to be a minister of Christ, may chide you, and tell you to take your "poor babes" away, for baptism can be of no benefit to them, it is our consolation to know, that our benevolent Redeemer when on earth, did not address such language to those who brought their little children to him, to obtain his blessing. No! "He was much displeased" even with his own disciples, who on this occasion so far mistook the design of his mission into our world, as to rebuke the parents who manifested so becoming a concern for the welfare of their children. And it would be well for those who now imitate the example of the mistaken disciples, in rebuking those parents who bring their children to Christ in his own ordinance, to receive his blessing, to consider whether they have not cause to apprehend that the Redeemer will be "much displeased" with them.

Another argument which the Lectures adduce in support of the claims of infant baptism, is drawn from the language which the apostle Peter addressed to the convinced Jews on the day of Pentecost. "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. *For the promise is unto you and to your children.*" The reader is desired to observe, that the Lectures do not build arguments upon the mere sound of words, but endeavor to ascertain the meaning of the words which are referred to for proof. There is accordingly, a good deal of care taken to ascertain the real import of the apostle's language.

On this argument, Mr. Williams breaks out in the exclamation, "Is it possible that the Dr. is unacquainted with the promise here spoken of?" I reply, if we may judge from his book, it is very certain that Mr. Williams is unacquainted with it. It is believed that the few remarks contained in the Lectures conclusively show that the interpretation, which the author of the "Reply" would have us to adopt, cannot be correct. And yet, strange to tell, he speaks with as much boldness and confidence, as though the apostle had in so many words pronounced judgment in his favor! Hear him! "Peter says, in contradiction of the Dr. 'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.' " A reader who would take Mr. Williams' word for it, would of course suppose that the apostle made this declaration, with reference to the promise in question. And yet, when we refer to the passage, it will at once appear that it is a manifest and bold perversion of the apostle's language. Peter was addressing the mockers, who said, "These men are full of new wine," when he said, "This is

that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." Acts 2:16. Here the apostle's object is to stop the mouths of these gainsayers by showing them that this miraculous effusion of the Spirit, by which the apostles were endowed with the gift of tongues, was the fulfilment of a prophecy of Joel. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." The reader will observe that there is nothing said here about a promise. It is Mr. Williams who foists in the promise and puts it into the mouth of the apostle, though Peter says that he is speaking of a prophecy.

By proceeding on to the latter part of the chapter, the reader may see what the apostle says with regard to the promise, from which the argument of the Lectures is derived. It was addressed to a very different class of persons; not to mockers, but to men burdened with a sense of guilt, and who, deeply concerned about the welfare of their souls, inquired, "Men and brethren, what must we do?"

Now, I would seriously ask the reflecting reader, would it be a reply adapted to the circumstances of such anxious inquirers, to inform them that an ancient prophet had foretold that in the last days, the Spirit in his miraculous gifts should be poured out on all flesh? No! A promise leading to Christ, in whom there is redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, is what is requisite to speak peace to the awakened and troubled conscience. And such is the promise to which the apostle directs the attention of these anxious inquirers. They are assured that there is remission of sins through Jesus Christ, whose Spirit they that believe on him should receive; and they are directed to a promise containing the grateful intelligence. But the prophecy of Joel speaks nothing of forgiveness through the blood



of Jesus; and consequently, it cannot be to this prophecy that the apostle directs these souls burdened with a sense of guilt, for relief.

As to the positive assertion of Mr. Williams that the apostle Peter says, that the promise in question is the prophecy of Joel, the intelligent reader will perceive, it is a perfectly gratuitous declaration, for which there is not only no proof, but which is directly in the face of the sacred history. In the one case the design of the apostle is to silence gainsayers, by showing them that the gift of tongues, with which he and his brethren were endowed, was conferred in fulfilment of an ancient prophecy; but in the other, his object is to comfort and encourage the awakened and contrite in heart, by directing them to a promise relative to the way of pardon and acceptance through Jesus Christ.

It still remains, however, to inquire what is the promise, to which the apostle refers. In relation to this matter, Mr. Williams observes, with great apparent gravity, "I hope the reader of the Lectures desires to know the truth." In this hope I most cordially unite. And having shown that the "Reply" has not told "the truth," with regard to what Peter said, if the reader will lend me his patient attention, I will endeavor to answer the question, What is "the promise?" of which the apostle here speaks. We shall be aided in furnishing an answer to this question, by considering to whom it extends. The promise, says the apostle, is, as recorded in Acts 2:39—

- (1) "To you," descendants of Abraham.
- (2) "To your children."
- (3) "To all that are afar off," the Gentiles, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

It will be of advantage further to consider what are the important blessings included in this promise. They are, remission of sins through the blood of Jesus, and the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, who applies to the soul the benefits of Christ's death. Verse 38.

Whatever may be the promise to which the apostle refers, the reader will at once perceive, that it is a very precious one, and of very comprehensive import. When we search the Scriptures, we find a promise with which these descendants of the Father of the faithful, were familiar; which was given to Abraham at an early period in the history of the church; which has been dear to the people of God in every age; and which admirably corresponds with what the apostle says of the promise in question. "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee." "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The reader is respectfully referred to the Lectures, for the leading reasons in support of the position, that it is to this well known promise the apostle has respect. The promise to Abraham, had respect to him and his children. "A God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." But it moreover extended to the Gentiles. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." That these words relate to those who are afar off, that is, the Gentiles, the apostle plainly teaches. "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."\* The seed promised to Abraham, and through whom he was to be a source of blessing to

\* Galatians 3:8

the nations of the earth, the apostle informs us was Christ. And that the gift of the Spirit was another blessing included in the promise, is evident from the following declaration: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; *that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*"\*

Here, then, we see that the promise made to Abraham, remarkably and very particularly corresponds with the account which the apostle gives of the promise in question. It extends not only to the parent, but to his seed; not to the Jew only, but to the Gentiles, who are afar off; it comprehends Christ and remission of sin through his blood, and also the Holy Spirit, who communicates to the believing soul the benefits of the Redeemer's death.

The precious promise made to Abraham, I will be a God to thee and to thy seed, which has made the heart of many a christian parent to rejoice, is so irreconcilable with Mr. Williams' exclusive system, that the very mention of it seems to ruffle his temper. And, accordingly, in relation to the application, which the Lectures make of the promise, he exclaims, "Is there no other promise in the Bible?" I am sorry for your sake, Mr. Williams, that you who profess to be a minister of Christ, should esteem this promise so lightly, as this irreverent question would seem to indicate. Christ himself is the great blessing included in this promise. In him all the promises are yea and amen. He who can in truth say, Christ is mine, is authorized to add, all things are mine. Though, therefore, there are other promises in the Bible, it may with propriety be said that

\* Galatians 3:14.

in this they are all included. The future revelation of God's gracious purposes towards his church, are the development of the unspeakably precious blessings comprehended in the promise, "In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Before I leave this part of my subject, the reader is requested to attend to a specimen of Mr. Williams' philological powers. He has not only read "scores of Pedobaptist writers," but he is amazingly familiar with the Greek; and is not at all pleased with me for not gratifying my readers with "one peep into the Greek language." If we may judge from the learning of their pastor, it might be supposed that the good people who compose "the first baptized church of Pittsburgh," are acquainted with as many languages as the apostle could speak on the day of Pentecost. But, as the "Reply" says, "To the record."

On page 34, the "Reply" undertakes to show that no argument in favor of our children can be drawn from the declaration, *the promise is to your children*; for, says he, "Children, in the passage, means posterity, descendants. The Greek word is not the same, which expresses a state of infancy."

It is not my custom, when preaching the gospel, to make a parade of learning by speaking to plain people in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew. Ever since my first entrance into a pulpit, it has been a principle to which I have endeavored to conform, to understand what I say myself, in the first place, and then to speak in such a manner that my hearers may understand what I say. However, I sometimes look into the Greek. And if you please, Mr. Williams, we will take up the Greek Testament, and not merely "peep" into it, but examine it like men of under-

standing, and see whether your authoritative declaration will stand the test. You say, that the word in question means "*posterity*," and is not the same which expresses a state of infancy." Now it so happens that the very first time the word is used in the New Testament, it has reference to infants. At the birth of Christ, by the order of Herod, who wished to destroy the infant Saviour, all the children of Bethlehem, from two years old and under, were slain. And in this event was fulfilled the prophecy, "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her *children*, and would not be comforted, because they are not."\* You see, then, that the word is here applied to children under two years of age; and I suppose it will be admitted, that such are in "a state of infancy." In his epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle says, "We were gentle among you even as a nurse cherisheth *her children*."† Here the word is employed with reference to children, who are yet under the care of a nurse. Examples of the same general character, may be seen throughout the New Testament. And now, if Mr. Williams would allow me to tender a friendly advice, I would say to him, do not stop with a "peep" into the Greek, but examine it with some care before you undertake to speak with such an air of authority with regard to its meaning. You remember the proverb, "He that is first in his own cause, seemeth just; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him."

The Greek word employed by the apostle in the passage under consideration, is of the same import with our English word *children*, as it is here trans-

\* Matthew 2 : 18.

† 1 Thess. 2 : 7.

lated. This is well known to every one, who is acquainted with the language. And no reason appears why the author of the "Reply," should substitute the word "posterity," in the place of children, save that our translation seems to rebuke his exclusive system, which would cut off the children of believers from all interest in the precious promise, I will be a God to thee and to thy seed.

The next argument in support of the claims of infant baptism, introduced in the Lectures, is drawn from the practice of the apostles. Brief as is the history of the primitive church, it informs us, that in repeated instances the apostles baptized whole households. And so far as we can learn from the sacred narrative, it was the uniform practice of the apostles, when the head of a family professed his faith in Christ, and received baptism, that his household were baptized at the same time. Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, was baptized and her household; the jailor who believed in God was baptized and all his; and the household of Stephanas was baptized. And these particular instances are mentioned in such a manner as to indicate that this was the usual apostolic practice.

It is admitted in the Lectures that it is not said, that there were children in any of these households. Nor is it pretended that an argument can be drawn from this fact, recorded in the history of apostolic practice, which would of itself prove positively that the apostles did baptize the children of believing parents. The language, however, which the sacred history employs in these instances, is just such, as we would expect to see used, in describing the progress of the gospel, upon the principle for which we contend; while it is not reconcilable with the princi-

ple which denies the right of infant baptism. If one of our missionaries while preaching the gospel among the heathen, should be successful in bringing a pagan mother to the saving knowledge of the truth, he would baptize the mother and her household, as Paul is said to have baptized Lydia and her household. Then, when we view the practice of the apostles in connection with the principles taught in the word of God, relative to the organization of the church, it furnishes a corroborating argument in support of the conclusion, that they regarded the children of believers as proper subjects of baptism.

That the terms, house and household, are familiarly employed in Scripture to signify a family, and therefore to include children, the Lectures prove by examples, and all reasonable men will admit. If it were necessary, it would be easy to add to the examples adduced in the Lectures, to an indefinite extent. "As for me and *my house*," said Joshua, "we will serve the Lord."\* "The Lord blessed Obed-edom and *all his household*."† "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus."‡

It being evident from these and similar examples, that in the language of Scripture, a man's household signifies his family, and consequently if he has children, includes them, it will follow, that when the apostles baptized a man and his house, they baptized his children, if he had any. But still it may be a question whether there were any young children, in any of the households, which were baptized by the apostles; for it is doubtless a fact that there are households, which do not contain any young children. The Lectures argue that it is every way pro-

\* Josh. 24:15. †2 Sam. 6:11. ‡2 Tim. 1:16.

bable that there were children in the family of the jailor and in that of Lydia, who were baptized upon the ground of the faith of their parents, because the sacred historian makes particular mention of the faith of the parents, but is silent in relation to the faith of their household. And they propose to produce positive proof, that there were children in these households, as soon as any Baptist shall produce positive proof that any of these families believed except the head.

Mr. Williams furiously assails the position of the Lectures; comes forward to the onset with a great show of valor; says that he can produce positive proof that all in these households believed; makes a *positive assertion*, that all in the jailor's house believed; and then, well pleased with the feat which he has accomplished, he turns round and says, "I have proved that all in the house believed." Ah! Mr. Williams, if you could produce proofs, as readily as you can make bold assertions, you would be a formidable antagonist! But, sir, did not your hand tremble when you dared to write the sentence, with regard to the family of the jailor, "Here the Holy Spirit emphatically declares that all his house believed, not by proxy, but in their own souls?" page 37. If one, entirely ignorant of the Greek language, should make such an assertion, however unwarranted it would be, it might admit of some apology, in consequence of a degree of ambiguity which results from the collocation of the words in the translation. But, you evidently wish your readers to suppose that you are familiar with the Greek. If, then, you will take "a peep" into the Greek Testament, you will see that the word which is translated "believed," is in the singular number, and re-



lates to the jailor himself and not to the members of his house. *He having believed in God, rejoiced with all his house.* This man by a remarkable display of divine grace, being brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and being made a partaker of a good hope through grace, would naturally rejoice in God as his own God in covenant. And since "*the promise is to you and to your children,*" he not only rejoiced in consequence of his own interest in the promise, but would naturally rejoice with "all his," as being jointly with himself partakers of the promise.

Had Mr. Williams been content with saying, that in his opinion the language of the sacred historian would authorize the conclusion, that all the members of the jailor's house believed, however much I may have differed with him, he certainly should have been permitted to enjoy his own opinion. But to introduce the name of God, and to represent the Holy Spirit, as "emphatically declaring" a thing which cannot be made out by legitimate inference, is to display a spirit which I forbear to designate by its appropriate name.

With regard to the family of Lydia, the "Reply" says, page 35, "That there were no infants in Lydia's household is perfectly evident, from the fact recorded in Acts 16:40." Now observe, Mr. Williams does not content himself with saying that it is very probable, but, that it is "*perfectly evident,*" that there were no children in the family of Lydia. If it is "perfectly evident," of course our organs of vision must be very defective, if we cannot see it. And what is said by the historian, which makes it "perfectly evident," that there were no children in the family of Lydia? Why, he informs us that

when Paul and Silas were liberated from prison, and found it necessary to leave Philippi because of the rage of persecution, before their departure they visited Lydia, and comforted their brethren; of whom there were not a few in this place, and who would be much grieved in consequence of being deprived of the company and instruction of their spiritual guides. As Paul and Silas, previous to their imprisonment, had lodged in the house of Lydia, it was very natural for the sacred writer to state particularly that they visited her whose christian hospitality they had enjoyed. And as the brethren in Philippi generally would be grieved on account of their departure, it was very natural that they should address some words of consolation to them on the occasion of taking leave of them. But the sacred historian neither says nor intimates that these brethren whom Paul and Silas comforted, were members of Lydia's family. No! On this point, the record is silent; and yet Mr. Williams modestly asks us to believe, that it is "perfectly evident."

We have here, then, a notable specimen of Mr. Williams' logical acumen. Paul and Silas, previous to their departure from Philippi, visited Lydia, with whom they had formerly lodged, and comforted their christian brethren, whom they were under the necessity of leaving. Therefore it is "perfectly evident that there were no children in the household of Lydia!"

"Optics sharp he needs, I ween,  
Who sees what is not to be seen."

In conclusion, then, I beg leave to say, that the position of the Lectures is not shaken. The apos-

bles baptized households. A man's household in Scripture language, signifies his family, and particularly includes his children. If there were children in these households, then the apostles baptized the children of believing parents. And that there were children in these families, appears every way probable from the fact, that the sacred writer makes particular mention of the faith of the jailor, and of Lydia, but is entirely silent with regard to the faith of any one of their families.



## CHAPTER V.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE MEANING OF 1 COR. 7:14.  
THE DESIGN OF THE ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF  
INFANT BAPTISM FROM HISTORY. THE TESTI-  
MONY OF JUSTIN MARTYR.

No sooner has a parent obtained a good hope through grace, than the earnest desire of his heart will be, to see his children partakers of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. And as all who are taught of the Lord know that the church is the house of God; that the Lord hath chosen Zion and hath desired it for his habitation, saying, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it," the christian parent naturally inquires, What is the nature of the relation between my children and the church of the living God? Does the King of Zion regard my children as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenant of promise; or does he condescend to look upon them as fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God? These are no idle questions. However lightly profane men may esteem the privilege of membership in the church of God, and however sneeringly the Pastor of the *First Baptized Church* of Pittsburgh, may talk of "making christians of poor babes, whether they will or not," the intelligent christian cannot but feel interested to know, whether the King of Zion has allotted a

place to his children in his kingdom on earth, or whether he regards them as aliens and foreigners.

The Lectures argue that the Author of our holy religion has given an answer to this question, in accordance with the feelings and desires of the parental heart. And such an answer, it is believed, is furnished in the words of the apostle, 1 Cor. 7:14: "*Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.*" The argument from this portion of Scripture depends upon the meaning of the term *holy*. After noticing certain acceptations in which the word cannot be understood, the Lectures remark, that "one of the most common acceptations of the term 'holy,' in the sacred Scriptures, is, separation to some sacred use, dedication to God." Accordingly, the nation of Israel is termed a *holy nation*, being separated from all other nations to be a peculiar people unto God. The Temple and all its utensils are said to be *holy*, being dedicated to the service of God. Certain animals, under the law, are termed holy, because proper to be offered in sacrifice to God; while others are represented as unclean, because they might not be presented upon the altar. According to scriptural usage, then, the term, when applied to the creature, indicates a peculiar relation between that creature and God. The nation of Israel was holy. Between Jehovah and that people there existed a peculiar relation. The child of every Israelite was, from his birth, holy; that is, it sustained a peculiar relation to the God of Abraham. And as the consequence of this relation, it was a proper subject of dedication to God in the ordinance of circumcision. Circumcision did not constitute this peculiar relation, but was the appointed sign and recognition of it. The relation

itself had its origin in the gracious constitution of God, in which he declares, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed." But the children of heathen parents were unclean. Between them and the God of Abraham this peculiar relation did not exist, and consequently they might not be dedicated to God. If, however, a heathen parent renounced idolatry and embraced the religion of Abraham, he became a partaker of the peculiar privileges of this holy nation. And no sooner was he introduced into this peculiar relation to the God of Abraham, than his children enjoyed the benefits of it. They were no longer regarded as unclean, but as holy, and were recognised as such by receiving the sign of circumcision.

And how are believers and their children to be regarded under the gospel dispensation? Addressing those to whom Jesus Christ is precious, the apostle Peter says, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, *an holy nation*, a peculiar people." It is perfectly evident, then, that believers sustain to God a peculiar relation by which they are distinguished from the world, and that they have a right to be recognised in the way which God hath appointed, as belonging to the household of God. But it is not more positively declared that believers are a "holy nation," than it is clearly taught that their children are holy. "But now," says the apostle, "*are they holy*." And consequently God has conferred on them a right to be recognised as belonging to the household of God, which no man may disannul. And hence from this scriptural principle, that God now regards the children of a believer as holy, their right to baptism is just as evident, as that the seed of Abraham had a right to circumcision.

Such is the argument of the Lectures. And how does Mr. Williams meet it? Does he undertake to show from Scripture that the interpretation of the term "holy," is incorrect? No! This he could not do. But to admit honestly, that the interpretation is in accordance with scripture usage, would have been to place himself in rather an awkward predicament. What then is his resort? To admit that the term holy, is here to be taken in its scriptural sense, would be in effect to yield the argument. And however honorable this would have been, it would not have comported so well with his object in writing the "Reply." Accordingly he wraps himself up in his dignity, and placing all authority, both sacred and profane, under his feet, he asserts with as much self-importance, as though the determination of the meaning of language had been committed to his sovereign good pleasure, "The term 'holy,' in the passage, is employed in the sense of *legitimate*."

And what authority, let me ask, have you, sir, for such an assertion? You have said in another place, (and it is the best thing you have said in all your "Reply,") "The time is fast passing away, in which people will be satisfied to take their instructions at the lips of their minister without reference to the word of God." And what will people who possess a moderate stock of common sense, in connection with a reasonable acquaintance with the language of the Bible, think of the minister who tells them that the word "holy," is to be understood in the sense of "legitimate?" Will they not be very apt to suspect, that he is aiming at the accomplishment of an object which is not very "legitimate?"

I must be permitted then to say, in behalf of the



people, that we cannot take such instruction from your lips, "without some reference to the word of God;" and you give us none. Can you produce a solitary example in all the Bible, in which the word in question conveys the idea of legitimacy? Familiar with Greek Lexicons as you would have your readers to believe that you are, can you produce the authority of one out of them all, in support of your interpretation? It is not pretended that such authority exists.

The reader is desired to pause for a moment, and look at the attitude in which Mr. Williams exhibits himself to our view. Here is a plain word of very common occurrence in the sacred Scriptures. This portion of the word of God, in which it occurs, admits of an easy and natural interpretation, if we understand the term "holy," in its ordinary scriptural acceptation. But to take the term in its usual sense, in the passage under consideration, would be to establish a doctrine which Mr. Williams manifests, at least, a strong disposition to overthrow. Accordingly, he departs from the scriptural meaning of the word altogether, and puts upon it an interpretation which it bears no where else in all the Bible. And such are the difficulties to which men subject themselves, when they undertake to make the Scriptures bend to support their opinions, instead of making their opinions bow with humility to the authority of God's word.

Believing parent! rejoice, since he who is thy God hath declared, that thy children are "holy." He regards them as sustaining to him a peculiar relation; and hence it is your precious privilege to dedicate them to him. Thankful for the privilege which, as members of the household of God, you enjoy,

present your children to him, that through the medium of his own ordinance, he may communicate to them that grace which is necessary to make them holy in heart, and heirs to that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

After having advanced such arguments from the word of God, as were considered sufficient to show that the children of believers have by divine appointment a right to baptism, the Lectures proceed to examine the history of the primitive church, for the purpose of ascertaining what was the practice which prevailed in the ages immediately succeeding the period when the apostles closed their labors. We have searched the Scriptures, which are the only rule of faith and practice, and are fully persuaded that infant baptism is the doctrine of the word of God. Our faith is founded not upon the opinions of pious and learned men in the church, but upon what is taught in the Oracles of truth. If, however, it appears as the result of careful inquiry, that those who were contemporary with the apostles, or those who were the immediate successors of the apostles, regarded the children of believers as proper subjects of baptism, this will afford corroborative evidence that our interpretation of the apostolic doctrine is correct.

The reader is respectfully desired to turn to page 71 of the Lectures, and observe the care which is taken to state explicitly the use which the author proposes to make of the historical testimony, which is adduced in favor of infant baptism. It is there distinctly declared that "our faith does not rest upon the testimony of the fathers, but upon the word of God. However, it is to be supposed that those who lived in the age immediately succeeding that of the

apostles, were acquainted with the practice of the apostolic churches. And though in general, they are not entitled to much regard, as expounders of the doctrines of the gospel, yet the Fathers are certainly competent to bear testimony as to matters of fact which came under their own observation."

Our object, then, in referring to the history of the primitive church, is not to learn whether infant baptism is really a doctrine of the Bible—for that point has already been determined by an appeal to the law and to the testimony—but, to ascertain whether it was the practice of the church at that time, to administer baptism to the children of believing parents. It is a fact, over which every friend of christianity, while perusing the pages of ecclesiastical history, has had occasion to mourn, that at an early period, corruptions both in doctrine and worship, were introduced into the church. Still, however, in the darkest period, Jesus Christ has had a church in the world, which has held fast his word and kept his ordinances. And our inquiry is simply this: Is infant baptism an ordinance which the church has observed from the days of the apostles down to the present time? It is a question of fact, which can be determined only by an appeal to the history of the church of Christ.

After the Lectures have thus distinctly and explicitly stated the object for which it is proposed to examine the early history of the church, the reader is requested to notice the palpable misrepresentation of this object which is made by the author of the "Reply." Hear him! After *modestly* stating that the "Dr. has totally failed to find precept, example, or even a shadow of infant baptism in the word of God," it is added, "*he proceeds to search the Pan-*

*dora of human tradition, for authority in favor of this cusiom of the Romish church.*" "To search human tradition for *authority*," in support of infant baptism! Had you, sir, no compunctions of conscience when you penned this sentence, in which you, in the most direct terms, misrepresent the plainly expressed design of the author to whom you profess to reply? In the book before you it is expressly declared, that "our faith does not rest upon the testimony of the Fathers, but upon the word of God." And yet you, utterly disregarding the sacred obligations of honor and of truth, tell your readers, that my object in searching "human tradition," is, to find "authority" for this article of our faith! You, sir, know very well that the idea of reliance upon "human tradition," in matters of faith, is abhorrent to the soul of every true Protestant. And while the book before you contained a plain disavowal of all such reliance, let me ask, where was christian courtesy? where were truth and honesty, when you presumed to tell your readers, that my object in examining the history of the church, was, to find "*authority*" for infant baptism?

"Authority in favor of *this custom of the Romish church!*" And is it possible that a man who is surrounded with an intelligent christian population like that of Pittsburgh, can so completely take leave of all the decencies of civilized society, as to offer a deliberate insult to a whole community! Mr. Williams lives in the midst of a Protestant community, of whom, it is believed, nine-tenths of the most intelligent and pious, conscientiously regard infant baptism as a doctrine included in the faith once delivered to the saints; and yet he has the impudence to charge this whole Protestant community with

holding a mere "*custom of the Romish church!*" Well does it become the man to hang his head, as he walks the streets of a city, whose Protestant inhabitants he has thus grossly insulted!

But in connection with this display of arrogance and ignorance, Mr. Williams gives us an exhibition of his classical knowledge. He represents the author of the Lectures, as searching "*the Pandora of human tradition!*" The *Pandora* of human tradition! And what is that? the honest reader exclaims. Pandora, according to Grecian fable, was the first female that was created. She was married to Epimetheus. In the dwelling of Epimetheus, was a closed jar, which he had been strictly charged never to open. Pandora, however, under the influence of female curiosity, one day raised the lid of the jar, when out flew all the evils which have since afflicted the human family, and spread themselves over the earth. And hence the phrase, "*Pandora's jar;*" or, according to the more common but incorrect expression, "*Pandora's box,*" is sometimes employed by a figure of speech, to signify any thing which is the source of much evil.\* It would seem that Mr. Williams has somewhere seen or heard of the fable of "*Pandora's box.*" But having taken a "peep" only at the fable, as we have seen he does at some other things about which he writes, he has mistaken Pandora herself for the jar, which contained the evils which were let loose upon society. And hence he represents me as searching the poor woman herself, instead of the jar, which she imprudently opened! To talk about searching the "*Pandora of tradition,*" is to speak about as good sense as it would be, for

\* Anthon's Classical Dictionary, article Pandora.

the servant-girl to say to her mistress, when Mr. Williams returns with his basket from the market, I will search my master (instead of his basket) to see what he has brought home for dinner!

And now, sir, if you will allow me to offer you a little needful advice, I would say, let classical allusions alone, until you learn how to introduce them, without making yourself ridiculous. They who cannot swim, according to the proverb, ought to be careful to keep out of deep water.

The reader then will see, that the avowed object for which the Lectures propose to examine the early history of the church, is not, as Mr. Williams falsely states, to find "authority" for infant baptism, but simply to ascertain what was the practice of the church in relation to this matter. A knowledge of what was the practice of the church, at any period subsequent to the age of the apostles, can of course be obtained from no other source but history; or, as the "Reply" disingenuously styles it, "human tradition." And accordingly, the Lectures examine the history of the first four centuries of the christian era. And the result of this examination is, a thorough conviction, that infant baptism is a doctrine which was held by the primitive church.

The first testimony introduced in the Lectures, is taken from the writings of Justin Martyr, who was born some time before the death of the apostle John, and who suffered martyrdom for the faith of Jesus, about the middle of the second century. The writings of this distinguished Father, to which the Lectures refer, are, his Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, and his Apologies for the Christian Religion, presented to the Roman emperor. In the former of these works, Justin answers the Jewish objection to

christianity, drawn from the neglect of circumcision, by showing that, under the Gospel, we receive what was meant by circumcision, through the medium of another ordinance. The passage referred to, is the following: "We also, who by Jesus Christ have had access to God, have not received this carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision which Enoch, and those like him, observed: and we have received it by baptism." The general import of Justin's remark, I understand to be this: It is true, as though he had said to his Jewish friend, that circumcision is not now observed as an ordinance of the christian church; but we sustain no loss on that account; for we have an ordinance which supplies its place. Circumcision in the flesh, was significant of the necessity of a change of heart; or in other words, of spiritual circumcision. And that which was formerly signified by circumcision, is now by the grace of God conferred through the medium of baptism. We christians, says Justin, have received the spiritual circumcision by baptism. I regard this then as indisputable evidence, that the primitive christians considered baptism and circumcision as institutions of the same general import; and consequently, as circumcision has been abolished with the change of dispensation in the church, baptism has supplied its place. The language of Justin is by no means peculiar to him. When we come to examine the testimony of Cyprian, of Athanasius, and of Augustine, it will be seen that it was common with the Fathers to speak of baptism as christian circumcision.

Another testimony to prove that the primitive church regarded infants as proper subjects of baptism, is taken from one of Justin's Apologies. In this Apology Justin defends the character of his

fellow-christians against the slanderous imputations of their persecuting enemies. And among other things, he remarks: "There are many persons among us, both male and female, of sixty and seventy years of age, who *from childhood were made disciples of Christ*, who remain uncorrupted." This Apology was presented to the Roman Emperor, Antoninus Pius, about A. D. 150; and consequently those persons, many of whom were now sixty and seventy years of age, and who had been made disciples to Christ from their childhood, must have been for several years contemporary with the last of the Apostles. It appears, then, according to this ancient Father, that persons may be made disciples to Christ from their childhood. Children are, by baptism, introduced into the school of Christ, and are then as scholars in connection with the household of faith, educated in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The force of this testimony, Mr. Williams endeavors to neutralize, by introducing another quotation from one of Justin's Apologies, which he says, "clearly proves that the childhood mentioned by Justin was not infancy." And what do you think, honest reader, is the statement of Justin, which "clearly proves," that childhood does not mean infancy? In giving an account of the manner in which individuals were introduced into the christian community, Justin states that they were previously instructed in the principles of the gospel. And then having professed their faith in Christ and having declared their intention to live according to the principles of the gospel, they were baptized. "I will now declare to you," says Justin, "after what manner we, being made new by Christ, have dedicated our-



selves to God—they who are persuaded and do believe that these things which are taught and said by us, are true, and do promise to live according to them, are directed to pray and ask of God with fasting the forgiveness of their former sins—then they are brought by us to a place where there is water, and they are renewed,” or baptized. And what is there in this statement, to prove that childhood does not mean infancy? It must be evident to every intelligent reader, that it “clearly proves” no such thing. It simply proves that at that time, the church was careful in attending to the religious instruction of those who were received into her fellowship; and all regular churches now, are attentive to the same duty.

It would appear that Mr. Williams himself felt very sensible, that the language of Justin does not “clearly prove” the point which he wished to establish by it. And, therefore, he adds something of his own to help out the deficiency. After Justin describes the manner in which individuals are prepared for admission into the church, he adds, “Then they are brought by us to a place where there is water, and they are renewed.” But, in Mr. Williams’ version, it is, “Then [AND NOT UNTIL THEN] they are brought to a place of water.” The words which I have inclosed in brackets are not found in Justin, but are an interpolation of the author of the “Reply.” I should not have thought it necessary to notice this pitiful artifice, had it not been that Mr. Williams not only puts into Justin’s mouth, language which he did not use, but to give the greater weight to his own interpolation, he displays it in glaring capitals. After all, when he has added to the text of Justin his own interpolation, “AND NOT UNTIL

**THEN,"** it does not materially help his cause. In the passage referred to, Justin is not speaking in relation to the case of infants, but with reference to those who were received into the household of faith, upon their own profession of subjection to Christ. And the manner of receiving such, in all regular churches, is substantially the same with that described by Justin. They are first instructed in the principles of christianity, and profess their faith in Christ, before they are baptized. But the object of Mr. Williams would seem to be to make this worthy Father teach that none but those who are capable of making a personal profession of their faith, are to be baptized, and consequently that infants should be excluded. The reader, however, who can consult the original, may, by referring to Wall's History of Infant Baptism,\* see, that in the Greek of Justin, there is nothing to correspond with Mr. Williams' "**AND NOT UNTIL THEN.**"

And while I notice this dishonesty in the quotation from Justin, I may remark that Mr. Williams pursues a similar course, in his references to Scripture, when the text will not prove his point, without some emendation. As an example, the reader may refer to page 37 of the "Reply." Here he says, "I have the infallible testimony of the everlasting and unerring Spirit, and the law of the Lord, that believers *only* are the proper subjects of baptism." That believers are proper subjects of baptism, the Bible clearly teaches, and all admit. But that believers "*only*," are proper subjects of baptism, is a point for which we have Mr. Williams' testimony, not the testimony of the Bible. For another example of the

\* Wall, vol. 1, p. 77. Oxford edition.

same kind, the reader may refer to page 44 of the "Reply." The apostles baptized *none but those* who believed and gladly received the word." That the apostles baptized such as believed and gladly received the word, we all know. But that they baptized "*none but those*," is what Mr. Williams says, not what the Bible teaches. It need not seem strange then, that a man who can add important words and phrases, to make the Scriptures support a favorite hypothesis, should for a similar purpose make free with the text of Justin Martyr.

In conclusion, then, Justin Martyr, who was born in the apostolic age, in common with the other Fathers, speaks of circumcision and baptism, in such a connection as can be explained on no other principle, but that he considered baptism as christian circumcision; and consequently, that infants were regarded as proper subjects of baptism. And, moreover, this worthy Father says, that there were many of his fellow-christians, who had been made disciples to Christ from their childhood. Unless, therefore, we could believe, with the Pastor of *the First Baptized church* of Pittsburgh, that childhood may mean manhood, or even old age, we must believe, that during the first fifty years after the death of the last of the apostles, it was the practice of the church to admit the children of believing parents into the school of Christ by baptism, that they might be brought up under the maternal care of the church in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

1. The first part of the  
document is a list of  
names and addresses of  
the members of the  
committee. The names are  
written in full, and the  
addresses are given in  
full. The list is arranged  
in alphabetical order of  
the surnames.

2. The second part of the  
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the names and addresses  
of the members of the  
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written in full, and the  
addresses are given in  
full. The list is arranged  
in alphabetical order of  
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written in full, and the  
addresses are given in  
full. The list is arranged  
in alphabetical order of  
the surnames.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE TESTIMONY OF TERTULLIAN, OF ORIGEN, AND OF CYPRIAN, IN FAVOR OF INFANT BAPTISM.

The second witness introduced in the Lectures, to show that infant baptism was a doctrine held by the primitive church, is the Latin Father, Tertullian. And the greater importance is attached to this witness, because, in consequence of some peculiar views which he entertained in relation to sins committed after baptism, he recommended the delay of baptism, especially in the case of little children. Since, then, Tertullian was in favor of the delay of baptism, had the baptism of children at that time been regarded as at variance with the Scriptures, or inconsistent with the received faith of the church, instead of simply recommending delay, as he has done, he would have condemned infant baptism, as a thing improper in itself. But there is no intimation, that the practice was either wrong in itself or inconsistent with apostolic example. The passage quoted in the Lectures is from Tertullian's treatise concerning baptism, in which the following sentence is particularly deserving of consideration: "Therefore, according to every one's condition and disposition and age, the delay of baptism is more profitable, especially in the

case of little children.”\* The reader who may not have access to the treatise of Tertullian, can see an extract from it, either in Wall’s History of Infant Baptism, or in Gieseler’s Ecclesiastical History.

It is perfectly evident, as the Lectures state, that Tertullian himself was not in favor of infant baptism; and that he recommended the delay of baptism generally, but especially in the case of little children. But why should he recommend the delay of baptism? If it was not the custom of the church at that time to baptize children, such a recommendation would have been wholly unnecessary. And let it be particularly observed, that Tertullian simply gives it as his opinion, that the delay of baptism is *more profitable*. Of two practices, both of which are proper, one may be better than the other. It is proper to read the word of God upon the Sabbath, but it is more profitable to attend upon the preaching of the word. But of two practices, one of which is sinful and the other is a duty, no person, I suppose, but the Pastor of “*the First Baptized church of Pittsburgh*” would say, that the one is *more profitable* than the other.

It is so evident from the language of Tertullian, that infant baptism was, in this age, among the usages of the church, that even Mr. Williams admits, that “about this time, the error of infant baptism,” as he presumes to term it, “began to be introduced.” If infant baptism was introduced in the age of Tertullian, who introduced it? Can any man in his sober senses, believe that a doctrine entirely new and utterly inconsistent with the gospel, could

\* Itaque, pro cujusque personæ conditione ac dispositione, etiam ætate, cunctatio baptismi utilior est; præcipue tamen circa parvulos.

have been brought into the church so silently, that history has recorded no commotion, connected with its first propagation, nor has even preserved the name of the man, who brought about a change so remarkable? If Tertullian had regarded infant baptism as an "error;" as a corruption of christianity, would he have been satisfied with simply recommending the delay of baptism as "more profitable?" The supposition is preposterous! When Mr. Williams says that Tertullian represents infant baptism as an "*innovation*," he furnishes another example of a fault in relation to which he is exceedingly guilty, and that is, of putting into the mouths of those whom he quotes, language which they never used. There is no intimation whatever, in the language of Tertullian, that he regarded infant baptism as something new in the church. It was an existing usage of which he did not altogether approve, and therefore, in the case of children, he recommended the delay of baptism as "more profitable." And he gives a similar recommendation in the case of all unmarried persons. And Mr. Williams has just as much authority to say, that Tertullian represents the baptism of unmarried adults, as an "*innovation*," as he has to say, that this Father gives such a representation of the baptism of infants.

Upon the whole, then, it is quite evident to my mind that the language of Tertullian can be interpreted on no other principle, but that infant baptism was, in his age, a received doctrine of the church. It is no less evident that this Father, whose views were in some respects peculiar, endeavored to introduce the "*innovation*" of delaying the baptism of children; but as we shall afterwards see, he was not

successful in producing a change in the received faith of the church on this subject.

The next witness brought forward in the Lectures to testify in relation to the practice of the primitive church, is the famous Origen. It is somewhat amusing to see the pugnacious disposition which Mr. Williams displays, and which frequently prompts him to place himself in the attitude of opposition, when there is no need for it. In consequence of his keenness for battle, he sometimes drives his head against a post which he might as well avoid, and after all, gets nothing for his pains but a severe contusion. Of this we have a notable example in the manner in which he pounces upon the character of Origen. In connection with the mention of this remarkable man, the Lectures observe that, "He was a man of great learning, and one of the most distinguished writers of his age." This, every one, who is tolerably acquainted with ecclesiastical history, knows to be the literal truth. And yet Mr. Williams, without seeming to know what he is opposing, or what he would be at, insinuates that I have made a great mistake in saying that Origen was a learned man. And after calling in question Origen's claim to the reputation of a man of learning, he adds, with as much self-complacency, as though he really supposed he had gained a signal victory, "Let history decide between us." Decide what? Whether Origen was, as the Lectures state, a distinguished writer and a learned man! It would be to offer an indignity to the reader, who is at all versed in ecclesiastical history, to suppose that he needed any evidence to prove, that Origen was one of the most learned men of the age in which he



lived. But as some may read these pages, who have not access to the requisite sources of information, it may be proper to give the character of Origen in a literary point of view, as drawn by those who knew what they were writing about.

In speaking of the more eminent writers of the third century, the celebrated historian Mosheim, remarks: "Of the writers of the third century, the most distinguished for the celebrity of his name, and for the *extent of his writings*, was Origen, a Presbyter and Catechist of Alexandria, a man truly great, and *a luminary to the Christian World*.\* In his Classical Dictionary, Anthon gives the following character of Origen: "All agree, that he was a man of active and powerful mind, and of fervent piety; fond of investigating truth, and free from all mean prejudices; of the *most profound learning*, and the most untiring industry." And now, sir, permit me to ask, What think you of the decision of history, as to the learning of Origen? One thing at least the reader cannot fail to perceive, and that is, that whatever claim Origen may have to the reputation of a man of learning, there is not much cause to apprehend that Mr. Williams' "much learning," will make him "mad."

But there was no call for this puny attack upon Origen's literary reputation. The question with which we are concerned, is simply, What is his testimony in relation to the practice of the church in the age in which he lived?

Having insinuated that Origen has no claim to the character which the Lectures give him, as a learned man and a distinguished writer, Mr. Wil-

\* Murdock's Mosheim, vol. 1. p. 166.

liams tries to make it appear, that after all, the writings of Origen furnish no testimony in favor of infant baptism. The first extract from the writings of Origen is taken from a Homily on Leviticus: "Let it be considered what is the reason that, whereas, the baptism of the church is given for forgiveness of sins, *infants also are, by the usage of the church, baptized*, when, if there was nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them." Again, in the Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, he says, "For this also it was, that the church had from the apostles, an order to give *baptism even to infants*." This language makes it so plain, that it was at this time regarded by the church as an apostolic practice to baptize infants, that the only way to destroy the force of Origen's testimony, is to deny that those extracts are genuine. Accordingly, the "Reply" asserts, "The quotation made by the Dr. is a mere interpolation, made by Ruffinus, who pretended to translate the Greek of Origen into the Latin language." And having made this bold assertion, he adds, "This is admitted by Dr. Doddridge and proved by Dr. Gill." It would appear from the general character of his book, that Mr. Williams proceeds upon the principle of asserting just what suits him, without troubling himself to inquire whether the things asserted are true or false. And it is really an unpleasant task to have to expose that reckless disregard of truth, which obtrudes itself upon our notice on almost every page.

In the first place Mr. Williams asserts that the extract which the Lectures give as a quotation from Origen, is really an interpolation of Ruffinus. And then to keep his own assertion in countenance, he

adds, "Dr. Doddridge admits it." Now the truth is, Dr. Doddridge admits no such thing. What he admits is, that Ruffinus, in his translation of Origen, has made some bold alterations. But instead of admitting that the quotations which I have made, are passages which have been altered by Ruffinus, he says, "This is not applicable to all the passages brought from him" (Origen,) which refer to infant baptism. But let Dr. Doddridge speak for himself: "It is allowed there are many passages in Origen, which expressly refer to infant baptism; but they are chiefly to be found in those translations of his Greek works, which were done by Ruffinus and Jerome, who made some very bold alterations according to their own judgment and taste; *but this is not applicable to all the passages brought from him.* It may be added, that the translations of Jerome, which are often referred to on this occasion, were by no means so lax as those of Ruffinus."\* Some of the original works of Origen were translated by Ruffinus, and others by Jerome. Ruffinus seems to have used Origen, much in the same way as Mr. Williams does his authorities. When Origen was not sufficiently orthodox, Ruffinus, in his translation, makes him say what, in his judgment, he ought to say, not what he actually did say. Jerome translated more faithfully. And it so happens that both in those parts of Origen's works translated by Jerome, and also in those which were translated by Ruffinus, we meet with testimonies in favor of infant baptism. And hence, the genuineness of these passages may be regarded as satisfactorily established. It appears, then, that Mr. Williams has made a

\* Doddridge's Lectures, vol. 2, p. 385. London edition.

“bold alteration” in the text of Doddridge, to make him speak a little more directly to the point.

Let us, in the next place, see how Dr. Gill has proved what Doddridge is made to admit. The “Reply” says, “Dr. Gill has proved,” that my quotation from Origen is an interpolation of Ruffinus. What does Dr. Gill say in relation to this matter? Speaking of the testimony of Origen in support of infant baptism, he says, “This is taken not from any of his genuine Greek writings, only from some Latin translations, confessedly interpolated.”\* The reader will observe, that according to Mr. Williams, a point is *proved*, when it is boldly asserted. He says, “Dr. Gill has proved” the point in question. And in what does the proof consist? In a naked assertion; a species of proof exceedingly convenient, where arguments are scarce, and of which kind of proof Mr. Williams’ little book is full. But, after all, what does Dr. Gill prove, even if it should be granted, that a naked assertion is satisfactory proof? Simply that the writings of Origen have been to some extent interpolated; but not as Mr. Williams would have the reader to believe, that my quotation is an interpolation. There may be many interpolations in a work, while the mass of the work remains uncorrupted. Ruffinus himself admits that he corrected Origen in some places, where he uttered sentiments at variance with the received faith of the church. But, the subject of infant baptism was not at this time a matter in dispute; and as Origen on this subject held the commonly received faith of the church, Ruffinus had no occasion to make interpolations in the writings of this Father, which relate to infant baptism.

\* Gill’s Body of Divinity, vol. 3, p. 307. London edition.

In conclusion then, Origen, of whom Jerome says, "No one, *unless he is ignorant*, will deny that he was the greatest doctor of the churches, since the days of the apostles;"\* and who flourished during the first half of the third century, furnishes very conclusive evidence, that it was at that time the practice of the church to baptize infants. And though it is true that the original works of Origen have to a great extent perished with the lapse of ages, there is no reason to believe that his views on this subject, have been misrepresented in his remains, which have been preserved.

The next witness adduced in the Lectures, is Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, who suffered martyrdom a little after the middle of the third century. In the year 250 a council was held in Carthage, on which occasion a question came up for consideration, which originated with one Fidus, whether it was proper to baptize a child before the eighth day. The received opinion of the christian church at that time was, that baptism is christian circumcision. And from this admitted doctrine, Fidus drew the unwarranted conclusion, that baptism should be administered as circumcision had been, on the eighth day. I say unwarranted conclusion; because it by no means follows, that since the one institution has supplied the place of the other, therefore all the circumstances connected with them must be the same. On the other hand, it was to be expected that with the change of dispensation, and of the institution, there would be a change in the accompanying circumstances.

And what was the decision of the Council in rela-

\* Post apostolos ecclesiarum magistrum, *nemo, nisi imperitus*, negabit.

tion to the question? It was, that the administration of baptism is not to be restricted to any particular day, but that a child may be baptized any time after its birth. An account of the decision of this council, may be seen in an Epistle contained in the works of Cyprian. In this Epistle, Cyprian and all the other bishops of the Council, sixty-six in number, address Fidus in the following language: "As to the case of infants, whereas you judge that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born; and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born; we were all in our council of the contrary opinion."\* Any person who is capable of connecting two ideas together, can see from the reply of the council, that the difficulty with Fidus had nothing to do with the lawfulness of infant baptism; for that it was proper, no one denied. The only question then agitated was, whether, in the case of children, baptism should be confined to the eighth day, as had been the law in relation to circumcision. Fidus was inclined to adopt the affirmative; but the unanimous decision of the Council was, that there was no necessity for delay, but that a child might be baptized on the second or third day after its birth.

Now let us return to the "Reply," and see what it has to say in relation to this testimony.

\* *Quantum vero ad causam infantium pertinet; quos dixisti intra secundum vel tertium diem, quo nati sunt, constitutos baptizari, non oportere; et considerandam esse legem circumcisionis antiquæ, ut intra octavum diem, eum qui natus est, baptizandum et sanctificandum non putares, longo aliud in concilio nostro, omnibus visum est. Cyp. Epist. 66, Bishop Fell's edition.*

“But to the Record. Fidus asked, May children be baptized?” The record! Yes, Mr. Williams, this is a “record” of your own fabrication, but not the record of this Council. And I would ask, how can you, as an honest man, represent Fidus as proposing a question which would intimate that he entertained a doubt as to the propriety of infant baptism? I am left no alternative, but to conclude either that you have never seen the account of the proceedings of this Council, which is preserved in the works of Cyprian; or if you have, you must have wilfully misrepresented it. The question which Fidus proposed to the Council was, not as you represent it, “May children be baptized?” but, May they be baptized before the eighth day?

If it were necessary to adduce any further evidence, to show that Mr. Williams has entirely misrepresented the facts of the case, it might be added, that Augustine refers particularly to the proceedings of this Council, in such a manner, as to make it perfectly plain, that the propriety of infant baptism, was not the point in dispute.

Augustine, in his treatise on the Remission of sin, in his controversy with the Pelagians, proves that the doctrine of original sin, had been held by the church from the beginning, as was evident from the universal practice of baptizing infants. And among other historical proofs in support of his position, he refers to the decision of this Council of Carthage. And he says, that Cyprian, who presided over it, had been consulted by Fidus, in relation to the propriety of administering baptism before the 8th day.\*

\* Consultus fuerat, utrum hoc, ante octavum diem, fieri debet. Aug. Op. Tom. 7, p. 306.

And from the decision of the Council, that "little children, just born from their mother's womb,"\* might with propriety be baptized, and that it was not necessary to delay their baptism until the eighth day, he argues justly that it was then the doctrine of the church, that children are contaminated with the guilt of original sin from their birth.

But Mr. Williams does not stop with trifles. After he has put into the mouth of Fidus, a question entirely different from the one which Fidus himself proposed to the Council, and one which makes him express a doubt in relation to the propriety of infant baptism, Mr. Williams then proceeds to draw an inference from it, to suit his own purpose. "The question," says the "Reply," "proves that infant baptism was a novelty."

"The question!" And what question? Not the question which Fidus proposed to the Council; for that supposes that the church at that time was perfectly familiar with infant baptism. But it is a question which you, Mr. Williams, have fabricated for Fidus, which proves that infant baptism was a novelty!

To conclude my remarks on this point then, let me request the reader to observe, that we have here the testimony, not of a solitary individual, but of a Synod composed of christian ministers, sixty-six in number, from which it appears that in the third century, the propriety of infant baptism was a matter in relation to which there was no diversity of opinion in the christian church.

\* *Parvulos a materno utero, recentissimos.*



## CHAPTER VII.

### TESTIMONY OF AUGUSTINE.

The last witness introduced by the Lectures, to prove that the primitive church regarded infants as proper subjects of baptism, is Augustine, the renowned Bishop of Hippo. This venerable Father was born, A. D. 354, and after an active and useful life, he died in the seventy-sixth year of his age.—Owing to the peculiar character of the controversies with which the church was agitated in the age in which he lived, Augustine is led to refer to infant baptism, as one of the well known usages of the christian church, more frequently than any writer who had preceded him. During almost the whole of his ministerial life, Augustine was engaged in the controversy with the Donatists and the Pelagians. Particularly in his writings against the Pelagians, who rejected the doctrine of original sin, Augustine continually refers to infant baptism, as an evidence that the church had, all along, held the doctrine of the original depravity of our nature. And it especially deserves attention, that he refers to infant baptism, not for the purpose of proving that it is the doctrine of Scripture, but he appeals to the universal practice of the church in baptizing infants, as historical evidence that the church had uniformly held the doctrine of original sin.

The writings of Augustine afford such incontrovertible evidence, that infant baptism was one of the universally received doctrines of the church, in the fourth and fifth centuries, that the very mention of his name seems to throw Mr. Williams into a paroxysm of rage, so that he speaks "unadvisedly with his lips." Taking his leave of every thing like dignity and decorum, he descends to the personal abuse of this venerable Father. For example, Mr. Williams calls Augustine, "this fellow;" "this active tool of the pope;" "this murderous monk," who "served the cause of popery and the devil."

The reader, disgusted with this low and slanderous abuse of a worthy man, would like to know what is said of Augustine by those who have some knowledge of that about which they write. Speaking of the efforts which were made to sustain the cause of truth in the fifth century, the pious and intelligent Milner remarks, Augustine "was the great instrument of reviving the knowledge of evangelical truth. By a very remarkable work of divine grace on his own soul, he was qualified to contend with the growing corruption. For a thousand years and upwards, the light of divine grace which shone here and there in individuals, during the dreary night of superstition, was nourished by his writings, which, next to the sacred Scriptures, were the guides of men who feared God; nor have we in all history an instance of so extensive utility derived to the church from the writings of men."\* The following character of this distinguished Father is drawn by the learned Mosheim: "Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in Africa, is one whose fame is spread

\* Milner's History, vol. 1, p. 448.

throughout the christian world. And he certainly possessed many and great excellencies, a superior genius, a constant love and pursuit of truth, admirable patience of labor, *unquestionable piety*, and acuteness and discrimination by no means contemptible.”\*

And not only does Mr. Williams betray an unchristian spirit in traducing the character of an eminently worthy man, but also manifests pitiable ignorance of ecclesiastical history. Of Augustine, he says, “He was sent a missionary from the church of Rome to Britain.” Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo, sent as a missionary to Britain! Why, my dear sir, the children in our Sabbath schools will laugh at your blunders. Africa and not Britain, was the scene of Augustine’s labors. There was indeed a monk of the same name, who is sometimes styled in history, the Apostle of Britain, but who lived about one hundred and fifty years after the age of the Bishop of Hippo, who was sent a missionary to Britain, by Gregory the Great. And you have mixed up the history of these two men, who flourished at the distance of nearly two centuries from each other, and have fabricated a horrible tale of blood and carnage, for the purpose of exhibiting the character of the Bishop of Hippo in the most unfavorable light; and charge him with deeds with which he had no more concern than the Pastor of the “*First Baptized Church*” of Pittsburgh. So much for your knowledge of church history!

But the “Reply” further represents Augustine, as an “active tool of the Pope.” The title “Pope,” or Father, was originally applied to all christian Bish-

\* Murdock’s Mosheim, vol. 1, p. 252.

ops; but in process of time the Bishop of Rome arrogated it to himself exclusively, claiming to be regarded as the vicar of Christ and the head of the whole christian church throughout the world. In this modern acceptation of the title, there was no Pope in the age of Augustine. A notable example to prove that the Roman Bishop had not yet attained that supremacy, is furnished by the history of the Pelagian controversy. After two different African councils had condemned the heresy of Pelagius, such an artful representation of their sentiments was made to Zosimus, Bishop of Rome, by Pelagius and Celestius, that the Bishop was imposed on, and pronounced a decision in their favor. But, instead of acquiescing in this decision, the African Bishops, at the head of whom was Augustine, wrote to Zosimus, exposing the artifice of these wily corrupters of the truth, and communicated correct information with regard to the dangerous tendency of their errors. The consequence was, the Bishop of Rome, better informed, changed his mind and condemned the system of Pelagius, as heretical. Augustine understood the character of the Pelagian heresy much better than the Roman Bishop, and instead of regarding his decision as infallible, Augustine corrected his mistake, and induced him to reverse his sentence after he had decided in favor of Pelagius. And yet Mr. Williams would have the reader to believe, that Augustine was an "active tool of the Pope!"

After endeavoring to injure the reputation of Augustine, by charging him with things of which he never heard, Mr. Williams proceeds to give us a further display of his knowledge of church history. He informs us that, "under the influence of this

monk, a council was convened in Carthage, A. D. 416, to condemn the heresy of Pelagius, and that from Carthage, fourteen of them adjourned to *Melo in Numedia*. At this Council Augustine presided, and succeeded in procuring the passage of the following decree: It is the pleasure of all the Bishops present in the holy Synod, to order that whosoever denieth, that infants newly born of their mothers are to baptized, shall be accursed:" p. 48. Here our church historian gives us an account of a Council held in "*Melo in Numedia*." MELO IN NUMEDIA! There never was such a place on the face of our globe; and if there ever was a Council held in Melo in Numedia, it must have been in a different planet from that which we inhabit, and thither I shall not undertake to follow Mr. Williams.

In the year 416, to which Mr. Williams refers, there were two Councils held in Africa, which had reference to the Pelagian heresy, one at Carthage and the other at Milevum in Numidia. At the first of these Councils Augustine does not appear to have been present, but the latter he attended. It is probable, that it is to the latter of these two Councils, that our historian refers. However, there is some difficulty in the way of this supposition; for his Council at "*Melo in Numedia*," he informs us, was composed of only "*fourteen*" Bishops, whereas *sixty-one* Bishops attended the Council at Milevum. The difference between fourteen and sixty-one, however, might be considered a small mistake for Mr. Williams. But if this is indeed the Council to which he refers, the greatest difficulty in his way is, there is no such decree among the acts of this Council, as that which Mr. Williams mentions. The members of this Council, sixty-one in num-

ber, in an epistle addressed to Innocent, Bishop of Rome, gave him an account of their proceedings; and in an epistle addressed to them in reply, Innocent signified his approbation of what the Council had done. But neither in the epistle of the Council, nor in the reply of Innocent, both of which are preserved in the works of Augustine,\* is there any mention made of such a decree. And yet Mr. Williams says, that the "decree," to which he refers, was sent to Rome and ratified by Innocent.

In the year 418 a Council was held at Carthage, composed of two hundred and fourteen Bishops, among the acts of which is found the decree to which it would appear Mr. Williams refers. It may be remarked, that some writers have erroneously represented this as one of the decrees of the Council of Milevum, already mentioned. This Council which was held at Carthage A. D. 418, condemned the opinion which we have seen was maintained by some, as early as the third century, namely, that children should not be baptized before the eighth day; and also the heresy of Pelagius, who maintained that baptism, in the case of children, was not for the remission of sin. The canon of the Council is in the following words: "It is our pleasure, that whosoever denies that infants newly born from the womb of their mother, may be baptized; or says that they are to be baptized for the remission of sins, but that they derive nothing of original sin from Adam which needs to be expiated in the laver of regeneration, let him be anathema."†

\* Aug. Op. Tom. 2. Paris ed. 1586.

† Placuit, ut quicumque, parvulos recentes ab uteris matrum, baptizandos negat; aut dicit, in remissionem, quidem,

It is evidently Mr. Williams' design to produce upon the mind of the reader, the impression, that through the influence of Augustine, the Council was induced to establish a decree in favor of infant baptism, in opposition to those who rejected it. But that is not a correct representation of the design of the Council. There was in reality no dispute in the church on this subject; and there was no call for a decree with regard to a point universally admitted. This is abundantly evident from the writings of Augustine. The question before the Council was, not whether children may be baptized, but whether children newly born,\* might be baptized, or whether their baptism should be delayed till the eighth day? As we have already seen, this question came before the Council of Carthage which was assembled in the days of Cyprian. And in referring to the decision of the Council, as I have before shown, Augustine employs the same language. The decision of this Council, then, was not simply that infants might be baptized, but that infants just born might be baptized, and that there was no necessity, as in the case of circumcision, to defer baptism till the eighth day.

I do not see how it is possible for any man, who has ever examined the works of Augustine, to entertain a doubt with regard to the prevalence of infant baptism throughout the christian world, in the age in which this Father lived. It has already been remarked, that Augustine was engaged in controversy with the Donatists and with the Pelagians. And

peccatorum eos baptizari, sed nihil ex Adam, trahere originalis peccati, quod regenerationis lavacro expiatur; anathema sit.—Wall's History of Infant Baptism, vol. 1, page 470.

\* Parvulos recentes ab uteris matrum.

from the nature of the controversy in which he was engaged, he is led very frequently to speak of baptism, and often of the baptism of children. But Augustine had no controversy with either Donatists or Pelagians, in relation to the propriety of infant baptism. This was admitted on all hands. And from this universally admitted usage of the church, Augustine reasoned in relation to matters in controversy between him and his opponents.

Mr. Williams insinuates that the Donatists rejected infant baptism. But for such an insinuation he has no authority. Though Augustine has written much against them and opposed them with much warmth, he no where prefers any such charge against them. The Donatists separated from the Catholic (not the Roman Catholic) church, on the account of a difference with regard to discipline rather than doctrine. They contended that the Catholic church had become contaminated by having Traditors in her fellowship; and consequently they refused to have communion with her, and disowned her ministry. When, therefore, any one forsook the fellowship of the Catholic church and joined their party, he was re-baptized. The Donatists did not reject infant baptism; but they would not acknowledge the validity of baptism as administered in the Catholic church, whether in the case of infants or adults.

Augustine has written four books against Cresconius the Donatist, in one of which he gives an extract of an epistle, which he had received from him. In this epistle, Cresconius says, "Between us and you there is one religion, the same sacraments, and no diversity in christian usages."\*

\* *Inter nos, una religio, eadem sacramenta, nihil in*



In the conclusion of his fourth book against the Donatists, Augustine refers to the case of the penitent thief, who was saved through faith in Christ, though he was not baptized, and then exhibits in contrast the case of those who are saved through baptism, though not capable of exercising faith. And then he adds, "Which the whole church holds as delivered in the case of infants who are baptized, who certainly cannot yet believe with the heart unto righteousness, nor confess with the mouth unto salvation, as the thief did."\* No man possessed of common sense would have employed such language as this in a controversy with the Donatists, had they not received infant baptism in common with the Catholic church.

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of giving another extract from this distinguished Father, both on account of the evidence which it affords, that infant baptism was universally received, and because of the correct distinction which is made between the external rite of baptism and that internal change of heart of which it is significant. Augustine writes as follows: "From all which it appears, that the sacrament of baptism is one thing, and the conversion of the heart another; but the salvation of man is completed by both. Nor are we to suppose, that if one is wanting, it follows that the other is wanting, since as in the case of an infant, there may be baptism, where there is not the conversion of the heart; and as in the case of the penitent thief, there may be the conversion of the heart, without baptism; God Al-

Christiana observatione diversum. Aug. Op. Tom. 7, page 170.

\* Aug. contra Donatistas, Lib. 4, chap. 23.

mighty making up in both cases, that which was not wilfully wanting.”\*

In his controversy with the Pelagians, Augustine continually refers to infant baptism, as an established usage of the church, universally received. Among other radical errors embraced in the system of Pelagianism, the rejection of the doctrine of original sin, occupies a prominent place. Pelagius taught that the sin of Adam hurt none but himself; and that an infant is as free from sin as Adam was, when he was at first created. In opposing the heresy of Pelagius, Augustine not only proved that it was contrary to the word of God, but, that it is inconsistent with the faith held in the church from the beginning. And in establishing the point, that the church had all along held the doctrine of original sin, he appeals to the universal practice of the church in relation to infant baptism. Baptism with water is significant of spiritual washing, and points to the blood of Jesus, through which we are able to obtain remission of sin. But if an infant is free from the pollution of sin, it can have no need of spiritual cleansing, and the application of baptism would be unmeaning. And hence, Augustine argues that as it had always been the practice of the christian church to baptize infants, therefore the church had always held the doctrine of original sin.

Neither Pelagius, nor his coadjutor Celestius, intimated any doubt as to the propriety of infant baptism. On the other hand, they freely admitted that it had always been the practice of the church to baptize infants, and that the practice was proper.

I had collected various other testimonies, in favor

\* Aug. contra Donatistas, Lib. 4, chap. 25.

of infant baptism, from the works of Athanasius, Chrysostom and Jerome. But lest I should exhaust the patience of the reader, I shall not introduce them at present, but shall close this part of the subject by a few remarks intended to present the historical argument in its true light.

From the writings of Justin Martyr, who was born before the death of the Apostle John, and who suffered martyrdom about the middle of the second century, we learn that infant baptism was held by the church in the age immediately succeeding the apostles. The writings of Origen and Cyprian, who flourished in the third century, furnish satisfactory evidence that it was the practice of the church to baptize infants in that age. And the writings of Augustine, who was one of the most distinguished bishops of the fourth century, are full of evidence, not only that infant baptism was at that time among the usages of the church, but that from the beginning, it had been the custom of the church to baptize infants.

Between Augustine and the Pelagians there was no dispute with regard to the propriety of infant baptism. All admitted that it was proper, and that it had been the uniform practice of the church. Proof of this might be given to an indefinite extent. Let one example suffice. In a creed or exhibition of their faith drawn up by Celestius, we have these words: "*We own that infants ought, according to the rule of the universal church, and according to the sentence of the gospel, to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.\**" With the inconsistency and

\* *Infantes autem debere baptizari in remissionem peccatorum, secundum regulam universalis ecclesiæ, et secundum*

duplicity of Celestius, in admitting that infants were to be baptized for the remission of sin, while he at the same time denied they were contaminated with sin, we have no concern. It is the fact admitted both by Pelagius and Celestius, his fellow-laborer, that according to the rule of the universal church, and the sentence of the gospel, infants should be baptized, that the reader is desired particularly to notice. 'This no one in that age pretended to deny. Even Pelagius himself complained that he was "defamed" by his opponents, when they represented his principles with regard to original depravity, as leading to a virtual rejection of the doctrine of infant baptism.

And while we have this unbroken chain of testimony from the apostolic age, in favor of infant baptism, no writer in the christian church can be produced, during the first four centuries, who has opposed the baptism of children, as inconsistent with the system of faith once delivered to the saints. It is true as we have seen that the erratic Tertullian, recommended the delay of baptism, especially in the case of little children, as "*more profitable*;" but even he did not pretend to say, that the baptism of children was unscriptural. Pelagius, a man of learning and extensive information, who was a native of Britain; who spent some time in Africa; who visited the churches of Palestine, and who lived a long time at Rome, the centre of religious intelligence, and whose peculiar views in relation to the original depravity of our nature, presented a strong inducement to reject infant baptism, yet admitted,

evangelii sententiam, confitemur.—Aug. de pec. Originale, Lib. 2, chap. 5.

that it was in accordance with "the rule of the universal church and the sentence of the gospel," to baptize children.

Since, therefore, it was the practice of the church to baptize infants during the first four centuries immediately succeeding the age of the apostles, as is evident from the writings of the Fathers which have come down to us; as no writer can be produced who, during this period, opposed this practice as contrary to the law of Christ; and as the most distinguished writers of the church, in their controversies with heretical teachers, refer to infant baptism, as a usage of the universal church from the beginning; therefore, we conclude that the testimony of history is, that infant baptism is of apostolic origin.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### MODE OF BAPTISM. MEANING OF THE WORDS BAPTIZE AND BAPTISM, IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Having ascertained who are the proper subjects of baptism, the Lectures, in the next place, inquire into the proper manner of administering this interesting ordinance. This branch of the general subject is regarded as, in itself, of much less importance than the former; but in relation to this, as well as to every thing else connected with the faith and practice of the christian, it becomes us to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us. As the Lectures are addressed to christians, who it is supposed prize the truth and desire to understand it, this part of the subject is introduced with some remarks relative to the peculiar nature of sacraments generally, and of baptism in particular. In a sacrament there are two things to be considered: the external sign, and the spiritual reality which is thereby represented. In baptism, as all admit, the sign is water. That particular property of water, to which in baptism there is special reference, is its cleansing virtue. Hence the language which Ananias addressed to Saul of Tarsus: "Arise and be baptized, *and wash away thy sins.*" Baptism with water teaches us, by a significant figure, that we are the subjects of moral

pollution, and at the same time, that God in the exercise of his grace, has made provision for our spiritual cleansing. But every one who has any knowledge of the Bible, knows that it is not the water of baptism, which cleanseth the soul from the defilement of sin. The water is nothing more than the external sign or figure, which represents the purifying efficacy of the blood of Jesus. To apply the blood of atonement to the heart and conscience, for the purpose of cleansing from sin, is the work of the Holy Spirit. And hence the Scriptures speak of a twofold baptism: the one external, which is with water; the other internal, which is with the Holy Ghost. "Except a man be born of water and of the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."\* Since, then, the water in baptism is nothing more than the outward sign of divine appointment, it would be strange indeed, if the validity of the ordinance depended upon the quantity of water, or upon the precise mode of its application.

We have said that the application of water in baptism, is significant of washing. To this fact there seems evidently to be an allusion, in the words of the apostle: "According to his mercy he saved us by *the washing of regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ."† It is not, however, a literal but a figurative washing which is effected in baptism. The outward washing of the body with water, is significant of the spiritual cleansing of the soul, which is effected by the application of the blood of Christ by the Holy Spirit. What I regard then as essential to the proper administration of baptism,

\* John 3 : 5.

† Titus 3 : 5, 6.



is, that the water be applied to the subject according to some mode significant of washing. And as the Scriptures represent washing, as being effected in a variety of ways, our conclusion is, that the validity of the ordinance does not depend upon the precise mode according to which the water is applied to the subject. But as one of the common ways of washing referred to in the Bible, is that of sprinkling the cleansing element upon the person or thing to be washed, baptism by sprinkling is a Scriptural mode, which we decidedly prefer, and to which exclusively we conform in practice.

It is freely conceded in the Lectures, that if it can be made appear that the Author of christianity has appointed, that baptism should be administered in any one particular way and in none other, then we should sacredly conform to that mode. The author of the "Reply" would have his readers to believe that this is the fact; and that the only way in which this ordinance can be administered, is by immersion.

Mr. Williams condemns the use of the term *mode* in this controversy, altogether, and imputes to his opponents a most unhallowed motive in employing it. He says, page 50, "Here I would premise, that the term *mode* is made use of by our opponents, *for the sole purpose of destroying the ordinance*" of baptism. Observe, he does not content himself with saying, that our manner of speaking about the mode of baptism, naturally leads to the destruction of the ordinance. Even such a statement would have been untrue. But he goes much farther. He presumes to enter the bosoms of those who differ from him; to explore the secret recesses of their hearts, and to declare to the world the motives which influence them. "The term *mode* is made use of by our op-

ponents," he says, "*for the sole purpose* of destroying the ordinance!" Such insolence deserves no reply!

After having attributed to his opponents a most diabolical "purpose," the author of the "Reply" proceeds to observe, that "many Baptist writers," "out of courtesy," (!) use the term *mode* in controversy on this subject; and that in doing so, "both truth and the laws of language have been violated, as the necessary consequence." But as for himself (good man!) he cannot be guilty of so great an impropriety as to speak of the mode of baptism, and so violate both truth and the laws of language, "for the sake of politeness to men." What a valiant and unbending defender of the faith!

But, Mr. Williams, if there is no mode of baptism, and it would be a violation both of truth and the laws of language, to speak of the mode of baptism, will you be so kind as to inform the christian public how the ordinance is to be administered? I suppose, if a person is to be baptized at all, he must be baptized according to some mode. But if there is no mode, and it would be to violate truth even to speak of the mode of baptism, then I ask, in the name of common sense, if there is no mode of baptism, how can the ordinance possibly be administered?

After remonstrating against the use of the term mode in this controversy, Mr. Williams, in the next place proceeds to give his readers an exhibition of his philosophical and mathematical attainments.—But what is his precise object in calling in philosophy and mathematics to his aid, is not very apparent. From the remarks which precede his "**PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW**," one would suppose that his design is to prove that there is no "*mode*" of baptism," and

that to use the term *mode* in this controversy, is to violate both truth and the laws of language. But from what immediately follows, it would seem that his object is to prove that sprinkling and immersion are not the same thing, according to that mathematical axiom, that "Two things cannot be one thing, while totally distinct."

Come, then, gentle reader, and enjoy a little relief from the tedium of theological controversy, while you sit at the feet of our philosopher and take a lesson in the sciences. On page 50 of the "Reply," the author makes the following remark under the head of "PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW:" "Every distinct substance possesses a form, mode or figure, peculiar to itself." A truly philosophical remark! Will Mr. Williams have the goodness, in another "philosophical view," to favor the public with a description of the form, mode or figure, of the human soul? It will, I suppose, be admitted that the soul is a "distinct substance," or something which exists; but I think its form or figure has not yet been described in any of our books on philosophy! But while it will be admitted that all material substances to which, I suppose, our philosopher more especially refers, have a form or figure peculiar to themselves, yet it would seem to require a degree of sagacity which does not ordinarily fall to the lot of man, to discern the bearing which this fact has upon the question relative to the proper manner of administering baptism.

Having in one short sentence given a "philosophical view," the author, as though impatient to range throughout the whole circle of the sciences, launches forth into the depths of mathematics, and makes the following sagacious observation: "Mathematical

science ascertains the nicer shades of distinction between the forms of substances *and modes of action*." Here is a discovery in mathematics of which neither Kepler, Des Cartes, nor Newton, ever dreamed! Mathematical science ascertains the nicer shades of distinction, between different "*modes of action!*" What a pitiful thing it is, Mr. Williams, to bring in philosophy and mathematics into a discussion of this nature, as though the object were to induce plain and simple people to think that your learning is prodigious!

"O wad some power the giftie gie us,  
To see oursels as ithers see us,  
It wad fra monie a blunder free us,  
An' foolish notion."

Having given us a "philosophical view," and likewise a taste of "mathematical science," Mr. Williams gives us a definition of the words which are translated, baptize and baptism, from which his readers may see his amazing proficiency in Greek:—"The meaning of *baptizo*, according to classic usage and all the Lexicons, is dipping;" page 52. "The Greek word *baptizo* means immersion and nothing else;" page 55. This is so very plain, according to Mr. Williams, that he would have his readers to believe that I am very anxious to hide the Greek from my people, lest they should discover how I am misleading them. Hear him! "The Dr. seems to be reluctant to let his readers even have one peep into the Greek language. If they could but learn the alphabet and refer to any Lexicon in the Dr's. library, they would see that the Greek word *baptizo* means immersion and nothing else." No doubt Mr. Williams felt very well pleased with himself after discharging such a volley of wit! How he has ex-

posed the artifices of the Dr.! The Dr., simple man! thought to keep his congregation from taking "a peep into the Greek language," that so he might hold them in ignorance! But the pastor of *the first baptized church* of Pittsburgh, benevolent soul! has let out the secret, that "baptizo means immersion and nothing else!"

Whether Mr. Williams knows it or not, I will not undertake to determine; but if he will walk over to the Western University, any of the boys, who are reading the Greek Testament, can tell him that the statement which he has made is absolutely false. It is not true, and every body who knows any thing about the Greek language knows that it is not true, that the "Greek word baptizo means immersion and nothing else." And how a man possessed of common sense and honesty could hazard such a declaration, in the midst of an intelligent community, is to me passing strange. The Lectures freely admit that the word in question signifies to immerse, and that in classic Greek this may be regarded as its primary and predominant meaning. But at the same time it is well known that this is not its only meaning. Every good Lexicon gives the word other meanings, and represents *washing* as one of the significations of the word. The question then is, In what sense is the word employed in the New Testament? And more particularly, what is its import in reference to the ordinance of christian baptism? In the New Testament, the word is employed with reference to an institution with which the ancient classical authors were unacquainted. And, therefore, it would not be strange to find, that as the word is applied to a new subject in the sacred Scriptures, it is taken in a sense somewhat different from that which accords

with prevailing usage in pagan authors. It is so with other words, and why not with this? Take, for example, the word which in the New Testament is translated *church*. In no classic author of pagan antiquity, is the word church employed in the sense in which it is used in the New Testament. According to classical usage, this term signifies generally an assembly of men called together. But in the New Testament, it is used to signify all those scattered throughout the whole world, who have been called to the knowledge and the profession of the faith of christianity. If, then, it is so in relation to other words, that they are used in a peculiar sense in Scripture, there is nothing unreasonable in the supposition, that the prevailing acceptation of the term baptizo, in the New Testament, may differ somewhat from prevailing classical usage. One of the significations given of the word by all good Lexicographers is, to wash. And this we maintain, is the true import of the term as used with reference to the ordinance of christian baptism. In its application to this institution, it is not employed in the sense either of sprinkling or of immersion, but of washing. This sacred rite, as we have already observed, is significant of spiritual washing or cleansing from sin. And the word as used with reference to baptism, is not intended to designate the manner in which the water is to be applied, but the design of the application, which is washing.

The reader would suppose from the general tenor of Mr. Williams' remarks, that we maintain that the word baptize means to sprinkle, and that baptism signifies sprinkling. For example, he says of us, page.52, "they use a term, whose radical idea is immersion, according to their own admission, to ex-

press that of sprinkling.” If the reader will refer to the Lectures, he will see that there is no foundation whatever for such a representation. Such a silly thought, as that sprinkling is baptism never entered our minds. And we are just as far from thinking that immersion is baptism. Sprinkling is scattering water upon a person in small drops. Immersion, is plunging a person into water. But both of these may be done, where there is no baptism. Baptism is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, in which a person is washed with water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A question then arises, How is the water to be employed in baptism? How is the person to be baptized with water? I answer, that one very common mode of washing in Scripture, is that of sprinkling the cleansing element upon the person washed. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them: *sprinkle water of purifying upon them.*”\* As then, baptism itself is significant of spiritual cleansing; and as a Scriptural mode of cleansing is, by sprinkling the cleansing element upon the person purified, the conclusion is irresistible, that baptism is scripturally administered by sprinkling. But we do not say that the word baptize signifies in this ordinance, to sprinkle. Nor do we say that it signifies to immerse. Its signification is unspeakably more important than either. It signifies to wash, and emblematically denotes, cleansing from sin.

The grand argument in support of the claims of immersion, is, that “baptizo means immersion and

\* Numbers 8:5—7.

nothing else." If this position cannot be maintained, the whole fabric falls to the ground. The question is not, Does the word sometimes signify to immerse? Nor yet is the question, Does the word more commonly in classic authors convey the idea of immersion? All this may be granted, and still the point in dispute remains unsettled. If the word is often used in other acceptations; if, according to the best ancient Lexicographers, Hesychius, Scapula, Suidas, as well as the more modern authors, it signifies to wash, to cleanse, then the question remains to be decided, In which of these senses is the word employed with reference to baptism? And this is a question, let it be particularly observed, which classic authors, who were unacquainted with the sacred Scriptures, are not competent to answer. The correct answer to this question must be learned from the meaning and design of the ordinance of baptism, and the import of the word according to Scriptural usage. What, then, is the design of the ordinance? Is it to signify the plunging of a person into water; or the sprinkling of water upon a person? The supposition is ridiculous! It is neither the one nor the other. The ordinance is significant of washing, of cleansing from sin. And the word is used in the New Testament, to convey the idea of washing. And as this is one of the true and proper significations of the word, and as it is the only signification of the word, which strictly corresponds with the design of the ordinance, we rest in the conclusion, that the proper import of the word, in reference to christian baptism, is to wash. Baptism, then, is not an immersion, nor is it a sprinkling, but it is a washing with water. And though we admit that this washing may be performed in different ways, yet the mode



by sprinkling is at once Scriptural and expressive of the design of the institution. And hence we feel emboldened to say, that the very foundation on which the exclusive claims of immersion rest, is perfectly rotten.

For the purpose of satisfying the plain christian, who bows to the authority of God's word, the Lectures observe the following order:

1. Examples are adduced to show that the Scriptures employ the word baptize, where the idea of immersion is utterly excluded. And hence the unlettered christian can see that it is not true, that the word signifies "immersion and nothing else."

2. Passages of Scripture are cited to prove that the word baptize is used to convey the idea of washing.

3. Examples of the administration of baptism are examined, for the purpose of showing that the circumstances, in no instance, require us to suppose that the rite was performed by immersion; while in some cases the attendant circumstances are inconsistent with such a supposition.

In our next chapter, we propose to examine what Mr. Williams has to say to these things.

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## CHAPTER IX.

EXAMPLES IN WHICH THE WORD BAPTIZE DOES NOT  
CONVEY THE IDEA OF IMMERSION.    EXAMPLES  
IN WHICH IT IS USED IN THE SENSE OF WASHING.

In pleading the cause of immersion, Mr. Williams assumes the position, that the word *baptizo*, employed by our Lord in the institution of Baptism, signifies to immerse and "*nothing else.*" If the point assumed were true, the conclusion would be obvious that baptism should be administered by immersion. But if, on the other hand, the assumption is false, then it is just as clear that the conclusion is invalid.

That the assumption of Mr. Williams is utterly without foundation, the Lectures show,—

1. From examples in the New Testament, in which the word *baptize* does not convey the idea of immersion, and in which the meaning of the passage utterly excludes the sense of immersion. The first example to which reference is made, is the following: "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."\* Our Lord here assured his disciples that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost. And in the following chapter, we have the history of the fulfilment of that promise. Now

\* Acts 1:5.

what is the language which the Scriptures employ in relation to the communication of the influences of the Holy Spirit? Do they in any instance employ terms expressive of the idea of immersion?—Never! The terms *sprinkling* and *pouring*, are those which are usually employed. “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty; and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.”\* “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you.”† Such is the language which the sacred Oracles employ when they speak of the communication of the influences of the Holy Spirit. And in relation to this very baptism of which the apostles were made partakers, the same language is used. In accounting for the remarkable occurrence, which excited the amazement of the multitude, the apostle Peter declares, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will *pour out* of my Spirit upon all flesh.”‡ The plain honest christian will ask himself the question, How were the apostles baptized with the Spirit? And in searching for the correct answer, it is not necessary to take “one peep into the Greek language;” nor yet, that he should place himself at the feet of some scholar like the Pastor of the *First baptized church* of Pittsburgh, to have the difficulty solved. All that is requisite, is, that he open his Bible and read the plain intelligible words,—“I will *pour out of my Spirit* upon all flesh.” It is then just as palpably evident as plain words can make it, that here is a baptism

\* Isaiah 44:3. † Ezek. 33:25. ‡ Acts 2:16, 17.

in which there was no immersion nor any thing like it. And the humble christian, who bows to the authority of God's word, rather than to the dogmatical assertions of men, can have no difficulty in deciding that as the apostles were baptized, when the Spirit was poured out on them, so they are baptized in a Scriptural manner, on whom the water of baptism is poured.

To evade the force of this conclusion, Mr. Williams would have the reader to believe, that the house in which the apostles were assembled, was completely filled with the Spirit! and therefore, after all, it might be said that they were in a manner immersed in the Spirit! The Holy Spirit, as a divine being, is present every where throughout the universe. His presence fills immensity. But it is of the influences of the Spirit, communicated to the apostles, that the Scriptures here speak. And to represent a house as being filled with the quickening, illuminating, or purifying influences of the Holy Spirit, is monstrous! But the sacred history speaks of no such thing. It is entirely a fiction of Mr. Williams' brain. What was it that, according to the history, filled the house where the apostles were sitting? Let the reader open his Bible and answer the question for himself. "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house." The reader will perceive that it was "*the sound*, as of a rushing mighty wind," which filled the house.

According to the history of this memorable event, there were two external accompaniments of this baptism of the Spirit conferred upon the apostles.

1. There was "a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind," which sound filled the house.

2. There “appeared cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” Both wind and fire are employed in the sacred Scriptures as emblems of the quickening, enlightening and purifying influences of the Holy Spirit.\* In connection with these external manifestations of the gracious presence of the Spirit of God, the apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost; they were baptized with the Holy Ghost; the Spirit was poured out on them. The apostles then were baptized with the Spirit, when the influences of the Holy Ghost were poured out on them.

Mr. Williams in the next place remarks: “It ought to be remembered here that the Greek particle, *en*, rendered ‘with,’ in our version, is rendered in several of the first English versions by the word ‘*in*.’” Every Greek scholar knows that the preposition in question, may be rendered *in* or *with*, according as the sense of the passage may require. But is it so, that “several of the first English versions” have adopted the translation “*in*,” in the passage under consideration? Had the author of the “Reply,” condescended to name the particular versions, we should then have been able to show the reader the little value of this general remark, and how unsafe it is to depend upon his statements. I have now before me the different English versions, which were executed previous to the publication of our authorized version; that of Wicklif, Tyndale, Cranmer and Geneva. In each of these versions, that of Wicklif excepted, the translation is the same as in our version: “John baptized *with* water.” In Wicklif’s version, the translation is, “John baptized *in* water.” But the less importance is to be attach-

\* Matt. 3:11. John 3:8.

ed to Wicklif's translation, in a critical point of view, since he formed his translation, not on the basis of the original Greek, with which he was not sufficiently acquainted, but on that of the Latin Vulgate.

In the parallel passage, Matt. 3:11, to which Mr. Williams refers, the translation in Wicklif's version is, "I wash you in water; he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost." The translation of Tyndale's and Cranmer's version is, "I baptize you *in* water; he shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost:" the Geneva version corresponds with our own: but none of these versions adopt the monstrous translation, He shall *immerse* you in the Holy Ghost. Indeed, it is strange that pious ears can be reconciled to an idea so inconsistent with proper and reverential views of the ever blessed Spirit.

Mr. Williams' reference to the early versions, is as unfortunate for his cause, as his other references generally. Instead of helping him out of a difficulty, they only sink him deeper in the mire. The phrase under consideration occurs in four different places. Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, and Acts 1:5. Wicklif's version, which the reader will remember, is a translation of the Latin Vulgate, and not of the original Greek, is the only version which uniformly adopts the translation *in*. In Matthew, Tyndale's version adopts the translation *in*, in the first clause, and *with* in the last. But in Mark, and Luke, and the Acts, his translation corresponds with our authorized version. The version of Cranmer is the same with that of Tyndale; and the version of Geneva in all respects corresponds with our own. If, then, the question is to be decided by the

early English versions, the reader will perceive that Mr. Williams is found in the minority.

In deciding upon the relative merits of any translation, our appeal must of course be to the original. What then is the correct translation of the passage in question? It is admitted that the Greek preposition *en*, may be translated either *in* or *with*, as the sense of the passage may require. As one example out of many to which I might refer, the scholar may turn to Rev. 6:8. "And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill *with* the sword, and *with* hunger, and *with* death." Here it will be perceived that in three successive instances, the preposition in question is translated *with*, as denoting the instrument by which a thing is done. It is certain then, that the word before us may with propriety be rendered, as it is in our version, "John truly baptized *with* water." And that this is the correct translation, appears with sufficient evidence from the fact, that the same word in the latter clause, is correctly rendered *with*. "Ye shall be baptized *with* the Holy Ghost." I say correctly rendered "with;" for any other translation would not only be revolting to our views of propriety, but at variance with the circumstances of the case. The Spirit was poured out upon the apostles. And, therefore, it would be absurd to say that they on whom the Spirit was poured out, were baptized *in* the Spirit. Since, then, we can have no doubt as to the correctness of the translation in the latter clause of the verse, the principles of exegesis demand that we should adopt the same translation in the connected clause, unless the sense evidently requires a departure from it.



The position of the Lectures, then, remains unshaken. We have here a plain example, of which the unlettered christian may judge as well as the scholar, in which the word *baptize* does not convey the sense of immersion, nor any thing like it. The apostles received the baptism of the Spirit, when the Holy Ghost was poured out upon them.

Another example equally conclusive is furnished in 1 Cor. 10:2. "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." If the reader will turn to the history of Israel's passage through the Red Sea, Ex. 14:29, he will have plain and convincing evidence, that the Israelites were not immersed in the sea. And yet the apostle expressly declares, that they were baptized in the sea. Consequently, any person who can couple two simple propositions together, and draw the legitimate and plain conclusion from them, can see that in this case of baptism there was no immersion. The history informs us, that "the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." It appears then, that the Israelites were baptized in the sea. But they were not immersed; for, "they walked on dry land in the midst of the sea." Therefore, in this instance, the word *baptize* does not signify to immerse; which was the point to be proved.

To obviate this conclusion, Mr. Williams remarks: "The sea stood in walls on either side, and the cloud was over them, between them and the Egyptians, so that they were buried from the sight of their enemies, in the cloud and in the sea." Thus by the help of the imagination, Mr. Williams contrives to get the Israelites into such a situation, that by means of the cloud and the sea together, they are

buried out of sight. The reader will however observe, that the apostle says nothing about the Israelites being buried out of sight. He says that they were baptized in the sea. And unless we should take leave of our senses, and bring ourselves to believe that a person may be plunged into the sea, while he walks on dry land through the midst of it, we are sure that in this case there was a baptism, where there was no immersion.

2. Having proved by examples that the word baptize is employed in the New Testament, where it does not convey the idea of immersion, the Lectures in the next place adduce instances in which the term is used to signify *washing*, without particular reference to the mode in which the cleansing element is applied. The following portions of Scripture afford pertinent examples: "The Pharisee marvelled that Jesus had not first *washed* before dinner."\* "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash (baptize) they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing (baptism) of cups and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables."† The reader will please to bear in mind, that my specific object in adducing these examples, is to prove from the sacred Scriptures, that the words translated *baptism* and *baptize*, are employed to convey the idea of washing or cleansing. In these instances, the words in question are not used to point out any particular mode of applying water to the person or thing to be cleansed, but to designate the design and the

\* Luke 11 : 38.

† Mark 7 : 3, 4.

effect of the application of water, which is cleansing. And hence, in so far as the argument is concerned, it is perfectly immaterial in what manner the washing referred to by the Pharisee was effected. If it could be made appear (which it cannot) that there was ordinarily an immersion of the person, in the washing to which the Pharisee refers, this would in no degree weaken the force of the argument. For the design of the speaker is not to convey the idea of immersion, but of cleansing. The cause of the Pharisee's surprise, was not that he had not first *immersed* himself before dinner, but that he had not *washed*. And in relation to the usages referred to by the Evangelist Mark, "the washing (baptism) of cups and pots and brazen vessels," the same remark will apply. It is perhaps impossible to determine in every case, in what particular way these utensils were washed; whether they were dipped in water, or whether water was sprinkled on them. But it is perfectly immaterial in what particular way the water was used. The word baptism in this case, signifies neither immersion nor sprinkling, but washing. The design of the word is not to indicate the mode of applying the cleansing element, but the effect of its application, which is cleansing.

Since then it is undeniable, that the words *baptism* and *baptize*, are employed in Scripture to convey the idea of washing, without reference to the particular mode of applying the water to the person or thing to be washed; therefore, the particular mode of applying the water to the person baptized, is not essential to the validity of the ordinance. But one very common mode of washing referred to in Scripture, is that of sprinkling the cleansing element upon the person or thing to be cleansed. Therefore, the

sprinkling of water on the person baptized, is a scriptural mode of administering the ordinance.

Our conclusion is further strengthened, by an example taken from the apostolic description of the rites and ceremonies connected with the service of the first tabernacle: "Which stood only in meats and drinks and divers *washings* (*baptisms*) and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."\* The reader is desired to notice that the apostle, when speaking of the rites of purification observed under the legal dispensation, terms them generally, "divers baptisms." It is quite manifest that the design of the apostle is not to indicate the particular mode, after which these rites of purification were performed, but the end and the effect of these rites, which was, washing or cleansing. It is, however, equally manifest, that some of the rites at least, to which the apostle refers, were performed by sprinkling. And hence the language which he employs in a following verse: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer *sprinkling the unclean*, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh." The apostle here refers to the prescribed mode of cleansing persons or things which were ceremonially unclean, by "the water of separation."† The mode of application was by "sprinkling." "The blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer *sprinkling the unclean*, sanctifieth to the purification of the flesh." This is one of the "divers baptisms," of which the apostle speaks. And hence the conclusion is irresistible, that the person is baptized in a scriptural manner, on whom the water of baptism is sprinkled.

\* Heb. 9 : 10.

† Numbers 19 : 1—22.

We have then, it is hoped, to the satisfaction of the reader, proved—

1. That the word baptize, is used in scripture, where it does not convey the idea of immersion, and where such a meaning of the word is altogether inadmissible. Hence, when Mr. Williams says that the word baptize, means to immerse, and *nothing else*, he assumes a position which is irreconcilable with scripture.

2. That the words baptize and baptism, are employed to convey the idea of washing, without reference to the manner in which the cleansing element is applied. Christian baptism is significant of spiritual washing. Baptism, therefore, as a christian ordinance, signifies neither immersion nor sprinkling, but washing. It indicates not the manner in which water is to be applied to the body, but the design and the effect of its application, which is cleansing.

On page fifty-nine of the "Reply," Mr. Williams gives us a display of his learning, by presenting what he styles an "*Etymological View of the word Baptizo.*"

Under this head he makes the following most extravagant remark: "It is only necessary on this point, for me to say, that *universally, both in classic and sacred authors*, the word *baptizo*, is rendered *immerse*; or construed in accordance with that definition." In reply to this bold assertion, all that is necessary, is simply to refer the reader to the plain scripture examples which have just been cited. Any one who can read his Bible, can see that such a declaration, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, is found to be "lighter than vanity."

But to make extravagance more extravagant, Mr. Williams adds,—“Pedobaptist authors shall furnish

the proof;" that is, proof that the word *baptizo*, is "universally rendered immerse." It is really an unpleasant task to have to expose the utter disregard for truth which such unqualified and unfounded declarations evince. It is wholly unnecessary for me to inform any scholar that it is not true, that "universally both in classic and sacred authors, the word *baptizo* is rendered immerse. Every school-boy that has read the Greek testament, can refer to examples which cover with shame such unguarded declarations. The reader will observe, that the question is not, whether the word *baptizo* is sometimes very properly rendered immerse, but, is it so rendered *universally*? Does it mean *nothing else*? In reply to such interrogations, I have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Williams is not sustained by the authority of one solitary lexicographer of any reputation. And it is a very easy matter to show, that he is condemned by the authorities he has so pompously paraded.

It would exhaust the patience of the reader, and it would be a useless labor, were I to examine all the authorities cited in the "Reply." A few of them shall be noticed for the purpose of satisfying the reader how unsafe it is to rely on the statements of Mr. Williams.

He observes: "From the numerous lexicographers, I shall only refer to Robinson's Lexicon, which is the standard work in sacred interpretation; and Donegan's Lexicon, the standard work in classic study." I think it will be news in the literary world, to hear that those two Lexicons are *the standards* for the interpretation of the Greek language! But let us hear what the standards have to say. In the Greek and English Lexicon of Robinson, Boston edition of 1836, under the word Baptizo, he gives first as the

classical sense, the definition, "to immerse, to sink." Then with regard to the meaning of the word in the New Testament, with which only, we are concerned, he gives as the first sense, "To wash, to cleanse by washing." So much for Mr. Williams' first *standard* author, to prove that *baptizo* is "universally rendered *immerse*."

Let us in the next place, hear the testimony of Donegan, Mr. Williams' "standard work in classic study." *Bapto*, the theme from which *baptizo* is derived, he defines, "to dip," "*to wash*," "to dye." *Baptizo*, he defines, "to immerse," "to saturate," "*to drench with wine*." Now I suppose Mr. Williams himself will admit, that the lovers of wine, with all their fondness for the good creature, would not choose to *immerse* themselves in it, but would much rather *pour* it literally down their throats. And yet Donegan, his standard authority, says that *baptizo* means, "to drench with wine." So much for Mr. Williams' authorities to prove that *baptizo* means, "to immerse and nothing else."

I would here remark, that Donegan is not consistent with himself, in leaving out "*to wash*," among the significations of *baptizo*, when he gives it as one of the meanings of the root *bapto*. Scapula, Hedericus, Schrevelius and Groves, any one of whom is as good authority as Donegan, all concur in giving "*to wash*," as one of the significations of *baptizo*.

After a particular reference to his two "standard Lexicons," both of which testify against him, Mr. Williams proceeds to "bring forward a few out of hundreds of Pedobaptists, who contradict their own practices." The reader will observe, that the Pastor of the *First Baptized Church* of Pittsburgh is very familiar with books. At one time he could quote

‘scores’ of Pedobaptists, and then again ‘hundreds;’ and what is better, all on his side of the question! However, if the reader would submit to the trouble of examining his references, he would discover that if Mr. Williams has ever read the one-half of the authors to whom he refers, he would need to read them over again before he undertakes to say much about them. The first of the “hundreds,” whom he could bring forward to testify in his favor, and to prove that baptizo “*universally*” signifies to immerse, is John Calvin; and we are referred to Calvin’s “Institutes, lib. 5, chap. 15, sect. 2.” Now it so happens, that there are only *four* books in Calvin’s Institutes; and yet Mr. Williams has an extract from the *fifth* book, which Calvin never wrote! Such a writer need have no difficulty in proving any thing which he chooses to establish. We have seen on a former occasion, when his object was to invalidate the testimony of Augustine, he called to his aid, the acts of the council of Melo in Numedia; a council of which nobody ever heard before! And now to make it appear that the renowned Calvin sustains him in the extravagant assertion that *Baptizo* means immersion and *nothing else*, a book is ascribed to this distinguished author which he never wrote! Calvin admits, with all authors of any note, that baptizo means to immerse; but neither he nor any other author of established reputation, maintains, that the word in question, means to “immerse and nothing else.” Calvin does indeed admit that baptizo means to immerse; and he further admits that immersion was the practice of the ancient church. But he expressly says, “Whether the person who is baptized be wholly immersed, and whether thrice or once; or whether water be only poured or sprinkled



upon him, is of no importance." Institutes, lib. 4, chap. 15, sect. 19. I suppose the reader will admit, that when Calvin is permitted to speak for himself, he is very far from sustaining the dogmatical assertion of Mr. Williams, that baptizo means, to "immerse and nothing else."

Another authority brought forward by Mr. Williams, is Bretschneider. In relation to this German Neologist, he observes: "This writer is confessedly the most critical lexicographer of the New Testament." What? The most critical lexicographer? Why, sir, you told us a little before, that "Robinson's Lexicon is the standard work in sacred interpretation." And now in the vast extent of your reading, you have brought forward another author, who is confessedly a more critical Lexicographer than the standard work itself!

The reader is desired to attend to another profound remark of our author in relation to his authorities. "Indeed," says he, "the three New Testament lexicographers, Schleusner, Wahl, and Bretschneider, limit baptism as a sacred ordinance, to immersion." "*The three* New Testament lexicographers!" Then it appears there are three only, that deserve to be mentioned. And yet, strange to tell, Robinson's lexicon, the "standard work," is not among the number! My dear sir!—did you not begin to write before you were ready?

The reader's indulgence is craved while I examine one of these authorities, as a specimen of those which are spread out in hostile array upon the pages of the "Reply." Schleusner, is one of "the hundreds" whom Mr. Williams could bring forward to establish his position, that the word baptizo means to "immerse and nothing else." Let this distinguished Lexicographer, then, speak for himself.

In his Lexicon, under the word baptizo, he gives first, as the classical sense, "to immerse." And then he adds, "It is never used in this sense in the New Testament." And yet this is one of the "hundreds" of authors on whom Mr. Williams relies, to prove that the word baptizo, is "universally both in classic and sacred authors, rendered immerse!" In the next place, Schleusner gives as the first sense of the word baptizo in the New Testament, "to wash, to cleanse." And yet, Schleusner is one out of a countless multitude of authors on whom Mr. Williams relies, to prove that baptizo means "immersion and nothing else." O Shame! where is thy blush?

## CHAPTER X.

### EXAMPLES OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM, IN WHICH THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE AGAINST THE CLAIMS OF IMMERSION.

Having shown that the words *Baptize* and *Baptism*, as used in the New Testament, afford no support to the exclusive claims of immersion, the Lectures proceed, in the next place, to examine some particular examples of the administration of this sacred rite by those whom our Lord commissioned to preach the Gospel. And the conclusion to which this examination leads us, is, that there is no instance recorded in Scripture, in which the circumstances mentioned in connection with the administration of the rite, require us to suppose that the ordinance was administered after the manner of immersion; while there are examples in which all the circumstances are in direct opposition to such a supposition.

The first instance of the administration of baptism recorded in the history of the primitive church, is found in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles: "Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand." The reader who desires to come to the knowledge of the truth, is requested to consider attentively the circumstances connected with this case.

1. This vast multitude did not assemble for the purpose of receiving baptism,—and consequently, those previous preparations for administering and receiving the ordinance, which are now common where the rite is administered by immersion, could not have been made. At the present day, when our brethren are about to perform the rite of immersion, they are careful to select a place where a suitable supply of water is at hand; and the persons to be immersed are provided with suitable apparel. But in the case before us, none of the vast multitude had come to the place where they assembled, with any expectation of receiving baptism. The Holy Spirit had just been poured out in a miraculous manner upon the Apostles, so that they were immediately qualified to preach the word in the different languages of the people of every nation then at Jerusalem. The report of this wonderful fact being spread throughout the city, “the multitude came together.” To the assembled multitude the apostle Peter preached the gospel. After giving us a summary of his discourse, the historian adds,—“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation.” The spirit of conviction was poured out upon them; and in obedience to the divine direction, they professed their subjection to the authority of Jesus Christ, by the reception of baptism. Let it be particularly considered, that this multitude had not been previously instructed in the principles of christianity, so as to assemble on this occasion, prepared to receive baptism: and hence a considerable portion of time must have been spent in communicating to them that instruction which was necessary to enable them to make an intelligent profession of their faith in Christ.

Now when it is considered that this multitude had not assembled for the purpose of receiving baptism, and consequently cannot be supposed to have been prepared to receive it by immersion; and when you consider the time which must have been occupied in instructing them in the knowledge of salvation thro' Jesus Christ, and in the nature and obligations of baptism, is it credible, that three thousand persons could have been immersed during the remaining portion of that day?

To extricate himself from this difficulty, Mr. Williams replies in the first place, that "the historian does not say that they were baptized on that day." But does he not say that which necessarily amounts to the same thing? He says that those "who gladly received the word, were baptized; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls." We must then either admit that the three thousand were baptized on that day,—or otherwise, admit that some were added to the fellowship of the church, who did not "receive the word."

Perceiving himself, as it would appear, that this answer would not satisfy any person possessed of common sense, another effort is made to escape from this perplexing difficulty. "If," says the "Reply," "the work were divided between the seventy disciples and twelve apostles of our Lord, there would have been less than forty for each administrator." "*If* the work were divided!" Ah! but there lies the difficulty. "*If*!" If we should grant every thing which you find it necessary to suppose, you could then establish the claims of immersion very conveniently. With regard to the seventy disciples, so far as appears from the sacred history, their commission was temporary. There is no evidence whatever,

that they ever administered baptism as an ordinance of the church of Christ. And no man may build an argument on a mere supposition without evidence. The difficulty then remains in all its force; and nothing that the "Reply" has said, tends in any degree to diminish its weight, much less to remove it. How could such a multitude have been immersed, under the circumstances of the case, in the space of time in which these three thousand were baptized? The question has often been asked, and still remains unanswered.

2. But should it be granted that it is within the limits of possibility, that such a multitude of persons could have been immersed in the space of time in which these three thousand were baptized, where could a place be found in the city of Jerusalem, or in its vicinity, in which such a number of persons could be immersed? There was no flowing river or running stream of any considerable size, in the neighborhood of the scene. And if we should grant what is altogether improbable, that the pools of the city would have answered the purpose, is it to be supposed that the inhabitants of Jerusalem, hostile to christianity as they were, would permit the pools which furnished a supply of water for the city, to be polluted by immersing in them such a multitude of persons? Reader, if you will preserve your gravity, I will give you Mr. Williams' answer to this question. "In regard to polluting the pools," he says, "Josephus attributes the healing virtues of the water of Bethesda, to the entrails of animals brought to the sheep-market near by this pool." So then it appears that a pool rendered filthy by means of "the entrails of animals," would be an admirable place for plunging men and women! Ah! pudet! pudet!

But unfortunately for Mr. Williams, Josephus does not mention the healing virtues of this pool at all, much less does he attribute them to such a cause!

The Pastor of the *First Baptized Church*, of Pittsburgh, is a great reader, and seems to be very familiar with Doddridge. If he will refresh his memory by looking into Doddridge, he will find that the *silence of Josephus* in relation to the healing efficacy of the waters of Bethesda, was a matter of surprise to this distinguished writer.\*

It appears then, that all the circumstances of the case are against the supposition that this multitude were immersed, while there is nothing in the language of the historian, which conveys any allusion to immersion. And here let me call the attention of the reader to a very disingenuous remark of the "Reply." "On the baptism at Jerusalem it is only necessary further to say, that no historian thinks of describing the attendant circumstances of any given custom or rite, in their minutiae, every time he refers to it. He only deems it necessary to name it as he sees it, after he has once or twice particularly described the scene." The reader would at once suppose from these words, that the sacred historian had already in repeated instances, described the administration of this ordinance. And yet every one who has any knowledge of his Bible, knows that this is the first example of the administration of baptism recorded in the history of the Christian Church. The apostles had but a short time before received their commission to go and preach the gospel to every creature; being directed at the same time to tarry in Jerusalem, until they should be endued with power

\* Expositor in Loco.

from on high. Accordingly, the Spirit being poured out upon them on the day of Pentecost, they began to execute their high commission. "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." This then is the first instance of the administration of baptism, after the apostles received their commission and were endued with power from on high. And yet, there is not a single circumstance mentioned, which conveys the remotest allusion to immersion, while all the circumstances are unfavorable to the supposition that the rite was performed by immersion. The apostles themselves, had just been baptized by the Spirit, who had been poured out on them. And, therefore, it is a natural conclusion, that they baptized this multitude by pouring water on them.

The baptism of the Jailer of Philippi, is next introduced in the Lectures, as an example in which all the circumstances are against the claims of immersion. Paul and Silas having been imprisoned, the Jailer who was strictly charged to keep them safely, "thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks."\* By an earthquake about midnight, the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened. The Jailer awaking out of sleep and seeing the doors of the prison open, and supposing that the prisoners had made their escape, was about to kill himself. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, "do thyself no harm, for we are all here." By a remarkable display of divine grace, the jailer was brought under the power of conviction; and after he had been instruct-

\* Acts 16 : 24.



ed in the way of salvation by these servants of the Lord, "he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway." In this case, there is nothing mentioned which in any degree favors the supposition that the jailer was immersed; while the circumstances, (this baptism being performed in a prison, and at the hour of midnight,) are directly against such supposition.

Now, what does Mr. Williams say in reply? "They were in the prison," the Dr. says. Luke says, "they were brought out." Yes, but Luke does not say, that they were brought out *of the prison*. The jailer had "thrust them into *the inner prison*, and had made their feet fast in the stocks." But after the jailer had experienced conviction and desired to receive instruction, he brought Paul and Silas out of *the inner prison*, where their feet were made fast in the stocks. But that they were not taken out of the prison, is evident from the fact, that on the following day, when the magistrates sent word to the jailer to let them go, Paul and Silas refused to go out of the prison, until the magistrates themselves came and besought them to depart. Then they went out of the prison. From the history then, it is evident, that this baptism was performed in the prison; and it is every way improbable that it was performed by immersion.

The Lectures in the next place, notice other examples, in which it is alleged, that the circumstances favor the claims of immersion. "John was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there." John 4: 23. From this declaration the advocates of immersion infer, that John selected a place where there was much water, with reference

to a particular manner of performing the rite of baptism. This, however, is their inference; the history itself says no such thing. The word baptizing, here signifies not only the performing of the rite of baptism, but, the exercise of his ministry, of which baptism was a prominent part. John instructed those who waited upon his ministry, and thus prepared them for the reception of baptism. And that his ministry was attended by vast multitudes, is expressly declared. "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." A regard not only for the comfort, but even for the safety of the vast multitudes who flocked together to hear the preaching of John, rendered it necessary, in that southern region, in which running water was not every where to be found, that he should select such a place for the exercise of his ministry, as that which is here specified, no matter what may have been the mode, according to which the rite of baptism was performed.

The reader will here permit me to mention a fact, which came under my own observation. In my youth, I was once present at a Baptist association at Bethany, in Edgefield District, South Carolina, which is in about the same latitude with the place where John exercised his ministry. The supply of water at this place, was neither abundant, nor of a good quality. The consequence was, that much inconvenience was experienced by the brethren of the Association, during the few days of their meeting; and the complaint was loud and general that the place had been injudiciously selected, because *there was not much water there*. And those who are at all acquainted with the state of things in the southern part of our own country, know that when a place is

to be selected for what is called a "Camp-meeting," or other large assembly, one of the first inquiries is, "Is there a plentiful supply of good water?"

No inference then can with certainty be drawn from this fact in the history of John's ministry, but that he was a prudent and a merciful man, and consulted the safety and comfort of his hearers in selecting a suitable place, where the multitudes might attend upon his instructions. As to the manner in which he performed the rite of baptism, this passage of scripture says nothing.

The case of the Ethiopian eunuch is often appealed to, as though it were conclusive in support of the claims of immersion. But after we have examined with attention and care, the history of this case, all that can be determined with certainty is, that Philip baptized the eunuch. But in what manner the rite was performed, cannot be determined with certainty; and the inferences of men are likely to vary according to their peculiar views. Every one acquainted with the Greek language, knows that the 38th and 39th verses may with propriety be rendered, "they went down both *to* the water," and "when they were come up *from* the water." The man who will not admit this, I do not hesitate to say, is either unacquainted with the language, or he is not honest. Examples in which the prepositions are thus rendered, may be seen below.\* And as Philip and the eunuch were in the chariot, at the time when "they came to a certain water," and the eunuch desired baptism, it is extremely natural for the historian to say that they *went down* from the chariot *to* the water. And as the eunuch after he was baptized, re-

\* Acts 7:3, 4, and 8:40. John 20:3, 4, and 4:47.

sumed his seat in his carriage, it is equally natural to say that they went *up from* the water into the chariot. There is, moreover, a circumstance mentioned, which furnishes ground for a plausible conjecture, that the eunuch was baptized by sprinkling. In immediate connection with the passage of the prophet, which the eunuch was reading when Philip first drew near to him, we find these remarkable words: "so shall he sprinkle many nations."<sup>\*</sup>  These are the only words in the context which can be regarded as having reference to baptism; and it is reasonable to suppose that in explaining these words, Philip took occasion to speak of baptism and of the spiritual blessings represented by it. And hence the eunuch's desire to receive baptism, when "they came to a certain water."

In Mr. Williams' reply to this argument, he gives us another notable display of his extensive learning. He says, "the Hebrew word rendered "sprinkle," in the verse referred to, is almost invariably translated elsewhere by *astonish*." *Almost invariably!*

Now, Sir, you are caught! There is not a single instance in all the Bible, in which the Hebrew word is translated by "*astonish*." The word *nazah*, in its different forms, is employed in the Hebrew bible not less than twenty-three times, and instead of being "almost invariably" translated by "*astonish*," it is never in a solitary instance so translated, but is invariably translated by the English word *sprinkle*. And now permit me to say, that the religious public will expect of you some suitable apology for practising upon your readers such an imposition. While you have much to say about Greek, and Hebrew, and

\* Isaiah 52 : 15.

German, and evidently wish to pass for a man of extensive learning, you “almost invariably” display something very different from critical knowledge when you take a seat in the chair of Philology.

As the passage in Romans 6 : 1—4, might appear to a superficial observer to give some countenance to the claims of immersion, and as it probably has more influence with the uninformed, than any other, the Lectures have examined it with particular care. And it is believed that any one who will inquire into the meaning and design of the apostle, will be led to the conclusion, that the manner of performing the rite of baptism, was not then in his thoughts. It deserves particular attention, that before any argument can be drawn from this portion of scripture, in favor of immersion, we must take for granted that which cannot be proved, and which, it is believed, is not the fact—and that is, that the apostle in the passage under consideration, refers to the mode of baptism. But that it is to the spiritual meaning of baptism, and not to the manner of performing the external rite, seems conclusively evident from this consideration alone, that the apostle does not speak of a burial by baptism *into water*; but he says, “we are buried with him by baptism *into death*.” It is not, then, the external rite to which he refers, but the spiritual meaning of the ordinance. It is not the outward baptism with water, but that spiritual baptism into Christ, by which we become one with him and are interested in his death and resurrection, that the apostle here speaks. And as baptism is significant of our union to Christ, and of our consequent interest in his death and resurrection, we are said in figurative language, to be buried with Christ *into death*, not *into water*. Since then there is no ne-

cessity to suppose that the apostle refers to the manner of performing the rite of baptism; and since such a supposition tends to obscure if not destroy the sense, we conclude that the assumption of the advocates of immersion, is unfounded and improbable; and that the claims of immersion, in so far as this passage of scripture is concerned, stand upon a foundation of sand.

The reply of Mr. Williams to the argument of the Lectures on this portion of scripture, proves at least, that he does not know how to meet it, and contains nothing deserving of notice.

The reader is requested to attend to one other example of baptism, which it is believed no one, from reading the sacred history, would suppose was performed after the manner of immersion. It is the baptism of Saul of Tarsus.\* After this remarkable man was brought to a knowledge of the Savior and was filled with the Holy Ghost, "immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized." It will be admitted by every candid mind, that in this case at least, there is nothing which, in the remotest degree, looks like immersion. Saul was in the house of Judas, in the city of Damascus, when visited by Ananias in obedience to divine direction. When Ananias entered the house, he put his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost." And immediately Saul received sight, *arose, and was baptized*. He was not travelling in a chariot on the high-way, as was

\* Acts 9 : 18.

the Ethiopian eunuch. And therefore it is not said that Saul and Ananias went down to the water,—which in such a case is natural and appropriate. But he was seated in the house, while Ananias was standing before him. And what was done? Did they go out of the house to some contiguous stream? There is nothing like it mentioned. Saul, who was sitting in the house, *arose, and was baptized*. How natural is the language, on the supposition that Ananias baptized Saul by pouring or sprinkling water on him! But how many improbable “*Ifs*,” must the advocate of the exclusive claims of immersion call in to his aid, to extricate him from difficulty!

Let me conclude with two considerations, which conclusively demonstrate that baptism by sprinkling or pouring water on the person baptized, is a scriptural mode of performing the rite.

1. The baptism of the Spirit is, in scripture, always described by *pouring or sprinkling*. The baptism of water is external; the baptism of the Spirit is that internal change in the heart which is effected by divine power. The former is emblematic of the latter. Since the internal baptism of the Spirit is said to be effected by pouring or sprinkling, then it is absolutely certain that the outward baptism, which is emblematic of it, may be performed in a scriptural manner by sprinkling. “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring.”\* “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you,

\* Isaiah 44:3.

and a new spirit will I put within you.”\* “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”† In this latter passage we have a reference to the external baptism with water, in the phrase, “Except a man be born of water;” and also, to the inward baptism, of which the Holy Spirit is the author, in the phrase, “born of the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit in his purifying and refreshing influences, is represented under the emblem of water. And the communication of his influences to the soul, is represented under the idea of sprinkling: “I will sprinkle clean water upon you.” Since then the baptism of the Spirit is represented under the idea of sprinkling, the external rite of baptism is performed scripturally by sprinkling.

2. The blood of Christ which cleanseth from sin, and which is applied by the Holy Spirit to the heart and conscience for the removal of moral pollution, is termed “the blood of sprinkling;” and the application of the blood of atonement is represented under the idea of sprinkling. “We are come,” says the apostle, “to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the *blood of sprinkling*, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”‡ “If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, *sprinkling the unclean*, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God.” Since, then, the blood of atonement, of which the water of baptism is significant, is termed the blood of sprink-

\* Ezek. 36:25, 26.

† John 3:5.

‡ Heb. 12:24, and 9:13, 14.



ling; and since the application of its purifying virtue to the conscience, is represented under the idea of sprinkling; therefore, the application of the water of baptism in the form of sprinkling, is at once a simple, expressive and scriptural mode of performing the rite.

And now, dear reader, permit me affectionately to take my leave of you, by calling your attention to the great importance of the truth, that in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. It is to be feared that many place that reliance upon the external rite, which ought to be founded exclusively upon the atonement of Jesus Christ; and deceive themselves by imagining that, if they have been baptized in the way which they consider proper, all will be well. But I need not inform the intelligent christian, that the baptism of water, no matter what may be the manner in which the water has been applied, will be of no avail, unless we are partakers of the baptism of the Spirit. The ordinance of God should not indeed be undervalued, much less should it be despised. But let no one look to the water of baptism for that purification from sin, which can be effected only by the blood of atonement, applied by the Holy Spirit. And may you, dear reader, be saved according to the mercy of God, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, poured out on you abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior.—AMEN.



## A BRIEF CATECHISM ON THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

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Q. What do you understand by the *mode* of baptism?

A. It is the manner of performing the external rite.

Q. Is there a propriety in using the phrase, the mode of baptism?

A. There is manifestly. For if the ordinance is administered at all, the external rite must be performed after some manner.

Q. What are the conflicting views, with regard to the mode of baptism?

A. They may be reduced to two. The one maintains that it is essential to the validity of baptism, that the body be immersed in water: the other maintains that baptism is administered in a scriptural manner by affusion or sprinkling.

Q. Does not the word translated *baptize*, determine that the rite must be performed by immersion?

A. It does not. For though one of the significations of the word, is, to immerse; and though according to classic usage this is its predominant meaning, yet the word has other significations; and therefore it is a question to be determined by a reference to the New Testament,—In what sense is the

word to be taken, when applied to a christian ordinance?

Q. Why should not prevailing classic usage determine the meaning of the word *baptize*, in its application to Christian baptism?

A. Because the classic authors of pagan antiquity do not use the word with reference to that ordinance. As the writers of the New Testament employ the term in reference to a new institution, it is reasonable to suppose that they would use it in a peculiar sense.

Q. Do not Lexicographers of established reputation, generally give, as one of the significations of the word, "to wash?"

A. They do. Scapula, Hedericus, Schrevilius, Groves, and the Lexicons generally, may be referred to as examples.

Q. How does it appear that the word baptize, when used in reference to the ordinance of baptism, signifies, *to wash*?

A. Because this is the only signification of the word, which corresponds with the meaning and design of baptism.

Q. Of what is baptism significant?

A. It signifies spiritual washing, or cleansing from sin. Acts 22 : 16.

Q. Of what is the water in baptism emblematic?

A. It is an emblem of the purifying virtue of the blood of Jesus, applied by the Holy Ghost. 1 John 1 : 7;—John 3 : 5.

Q. In what manner then should the water in baptism be applied to the body?

A. It should be applied in such a manner, as, according to scripture usage, is significant of washing or cleansing. And as the blood of Christ is termed

the blood of sprinkling, (Heb 12 : 24;) and as the legal purifications were to a great extent performed by sprinkling, (Numb. 8 : 7, and 19 : 18—Heb. 9 : 13;) and as the influences of the Holy Spirit are said to be communicated by sprinkling, (Isaiah 44 : 3,—Ezek. 36 : 25—28;) therefore, the application of water in baptism by sprinkling, is both scriptural and significant of the design of the ordinance.

Q. Is there any truth in the assertion that the word baptize, signifies to immerse, and nothing else?

A. The assertion is palpably false. The apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost when the Spirit was poured out on them: (Acts 1: 5, compared with 2: 17.) The Israelites were baptized in the sea, and yet they walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left: (Exod. 14: 29, compared with 1 Cor. 10 : 2.)

Q. As the baptism of the Spirit, of which the baptism of water is emblematic, is said to be performed by pouring or sprinkling, are not they baptized in a scriptural manner, on whom the water is poured or sprinkled?

A. They are baptized in a scriptural manner.

Q. Is there an example of baptism recorded in the New Testament, in which it is said that the person was immersed?

A. There is not one; nor is there a single instance in which it can be made appear from the circumstances mentioned, that there was an immersion.

Q. What do you say of the case of the eunuch, recorded in Acts, 8th chapter?

A. Philip baptized the eunuch, but in what way we are not told. They may have stepped into the edge of the water, and Philip may have taken up

some water in his hand and sprinkled it on the eunuch; or, which is more probable, they may have gone down *to* the water without entering it at all. However, the sacred history does not say that Philip *immersed* the eunuch, but that he *baptized* him.

Q. What do you say of the passage in Romans 6 : 3, 4?

A. It determines nothing at all with regard to the mode of baptism, because it cannot be proved that the apostle alludes to the mode of baptism. He does not speak of a burial *in water*, but of being buried with Christ, by baptism *into death*. It is, therefore, not to the mode of baptism, but to the spiritual meaning of the ordinance, that the apostle refers.

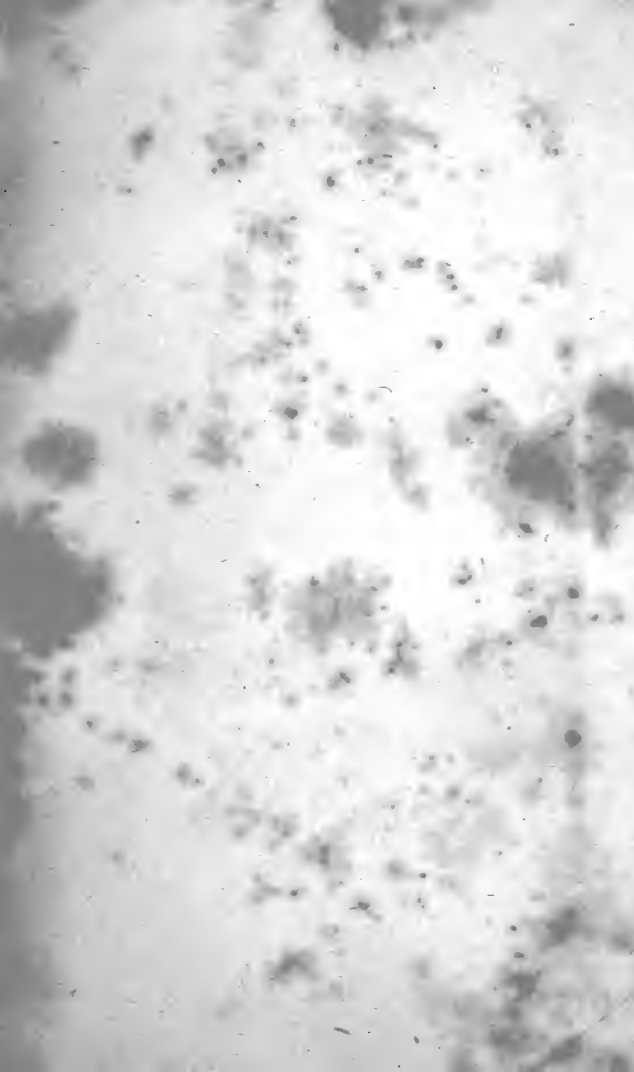
Q. What should be the object of our great concern, with regard to baptism?

A. Not that the water of baptism should be applied to the body in this way, or in that way, but to see that we are partakers of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. *In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*









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